

**The Quest for Self-discovery:
the reconstruction of self identity stories
in alternative therapy groups.**

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With love and thanks to Ruth and Sam who are growing into two beautiful young teenagers while I sit here in front of this computer. To Kevin, the mirror of myself. A special thank you to my brothers and sister, Ed, Derrick, Dave and Nina for being themselves. I could not have finished this thesis without all those who live at Old Hall and the "Tower" my own secluded spot, again my thanks for this never ending support. To my special friends who have never tired of anxious deadlines, Celia, Gerry, Arthur, Tina, Mary, Jo. Finally for all the academic support and friendship I have received from Phil Davies, who started me off and encouraged my inquiry. Jane Ribbens who has advised and discussed everything for many years and finally, to Tim Edwards who gave me new hope, discipline and structure to face the last stage. Without these three supervisors I would not be here.

Dedication.

In memory of Beryl and John Birch.

Transformation.

Always I trip myself up when I try
To plan exactly what I'll say to you.
I should allow for how my feelings lie
Ready to leap up, showing what is true.

Elizabeth Jennings.

The Quest for self-discovery: the reconstruction of self identity stories in alternative therapy groups.

Abstract.

This thesis explores the reconstruction of self identity stories in a defined area of alternative therapy. An initial document analysis of advertisements in directories, described as alternative to promote views and practices on complementary health and environmental issues, suggested that the category of psychotherapy and counselling was increasing more than other areas. I found that group workshops and courses were situated within this category of counselling and psychotherapy. The alternative therapy groups and facilitators I selected shared a promise to discover an inner self, described as the process of self discovery, and that this experience will about bring positive change. The concept of self-discovery is clarified from the range of alternative therapies used in the groups. The theoretical base of these therapies exhibit a central mix of alternative western psychotherapies and eastern philosophical beliefs, plus various selections of knowledge from all round the world.

The methodological approach used is termed an auto/biographical ethnography. This term represents the two essential constituents of research, my story of research and the stories of others. Firstly the method of collecting the stories of others were: participant observation in three therapy groups engaged over a period of one year, plus participating in one separate weekend workshop for comparison, the interviews of the six facilitators and ten participants involved with these groups, the interviews of another four facilitators who ran similar groups for comparison, and a document analysis of advertisements and magazines over a period of five years collected from many parts of England and Scotland. Secondly, the term auto/biography recognises my role of researcher in the construction of this defined area of research. The slashed connection between my story and the story of others enables myself, the researcher, to place reflections upon the research process during the stages of field work, analysis and writing up.

The resulting data revealed a distinct way of telling about this process of self-discovery in the interview setting and my field notes illustrated the strategies engaged to promote this type of telling. This led to the analysis of the data through an understanding of story telling, its connection with self-identity and social life. From this I draw two interpretations. At first the analysis focuses upon the content of the stories told in the interview. Two key themes are identified, which are reflected against the social theoretical debates that propose differing explanations of the constitution of identity in modern society. Secondly, by exploring the story telling strategies engaged within the groups and the construction of such stories, I conclude that the self-discovery story reveals a distinct script. This demonstrates a clear paradox between the claim of authorial authority found in the stories told and the inscription of a definite way of presenting such self identity claims. This paradox represents how the self-discovery story transcends a social relational understanding of self identity and locates its understanding within an inner model of reflexivity that assumes an inner residence of emotions. This transcendence is achieved through a distinct narrative organisation illustrating a success story and depending upon the use of a metaphorical self.

The term auto/biography is reflected in the analytical use of story telling as it shows how this research story is produced. The two different interpretations of data drawn from the distinction between the content of the stories and how such stories are produced mirrors the research process, where the story I produce for this thesis achieves a similar outcome. I can recognise how the final production of this research story continues to construct my authority as a sociologist while at the same time prescribing which sociological identity I adopt.

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groups.

Introduction.

This thesis is about stories and storytelling. It is how people seek to make sense of their lives through the stories they tell about themselves. It is also about my story, the story of producing and writing this thesis. The objective of this Introduction is to present you, the reader, with a guide to the presentation of the complex issues this research encounters. This research is a story of stories, which endeavours to show how my research has been influenced and constructed along the way. Therefore I write this guide as a brief overview to highlight the key concepts, themes and debates and show how they are incorporated into the story. The following is presented as a series of signposts, indicated by the use of bullets, to show how concepts and debates evolve and continue throughout the thesis.

- **Life Stories.**

Chapter One introduces and discusses the idea of life stories. I define life stories as the assembly and organisation of narrative episodes that seeks to implement a sense of unity and cohesion to the understanding of the person's life. Personally, for example, I could evolve various life stories about myself depending upon the context and the objective of the telling. My experiences of research, or my experiences of motherhood, for instance, can be told in different ways, but I use these stories to bring some sense of shared understanding to these experiences and constantly inform myself about my life as a whole. In this way the use of life stories distinguishes this telling from fiction, as I am assembling my story from my experiences as I seek to show parts of myself to another, and the various parts inform my sense of me as an individual. I have reached the concept of life stories from my exploration of social theories concerning narratives, stories and autobiographies, and their connection to understanding social life. The telling of such stories reveals the identity, process and

social context of self-understanding by the individual. I firstly develop an ontological position of autobiographical life stories from the philosophical works of Ricoeur (1992) MacIntyre (1985) Widdershoven (1993). Narrative psychology has developed and explored the understanding of self-identity in social life by looking at what is told in the process of narrative identity (Josselen & Leiblich 1993). Sociology has inherited a strong narrative tradition from the interactionist and feminist approaches to understanding peoples' accounts. The recent focus in sociology upon narrative has progressed into the exploration of how major life events, such as illness (Robinson 1990), and divorce (Reissman 1989), are reconstructed. Here the proposed reconstruction of narrative is analysed to show the way that meanings are changed and transformed in and into the person's life. The assembly and organisation of experiences is altered and adapted to allow the individual to come to terms with changing life events. This perspective has enabled me to understand a direct connection between the telling of life stories and ways of producing knowledge.

I argue that this reconstruction of life stories can be seen most clearly in the psychotherapies. The psychotherapies are distinct ways of knowing, where the telling and reconstruction of life stories is the objective. The development of psychotherapy is argued to be a systematic reflexive production of knowledge through which a particular sense of self identity is fostered (Bernstein 1990). The role of the psychotherapies is to promote new ways of assembling and organising past and present experiences into a new way of seeing an anticipated future. I have looked at this role of the psychotherapies in a defined area of alternative self-discovery groups. I briefly introduce this area of research in Chapter One and continue to clarify the understanding of self-discovery in its alternative presentation in Chapters Three to Six. The exploration of three self-discovery groups illustrate the practices of self examination and self reflection influenced predominantly by the work of Carl Jung and eastern philosophy, in an alternative setting of health and education, which encompass a new way of seeing yourself and social life. I explore the wider setting of this alternative psychotherapy network in Chapter Six.

In this research I gained access to, participated in, and interviewed the facilitators and members of three self-discovery groups. I interviewed other facilitators and looked at similar groups for comparison. To explore the role of psychotherapy in this

setting, as the production of new self-identity stories, I have developed an analysis of telling stories from Ken Plummer's work "Telling Sexual Stories", (1995). The stories told in the interview setting are analysed in relation to the generic processes of story telling: the content and structure, the nature of the story, the production and consumption of such stories, which created a shared culture of stories. I have analysed how the social practices of the groups promote these strategies of story telling. My argument that a shared culture is created is reflected against a wider setting illustrated by advertisements collected in this alternative setting. This analysis of stories is presented as Part Two of the thesis that I call the therapy story. I have divided the presentation of this thesis into three parts, to demonstrate the stages of putting the thesis together. The therapy story, the second part, is produced from my analysis of the stories told to me and my story of participation. This separation of parts endeavours to clarify the complexity that this thesis embraces and I discuss this in more detail under my signpost of framing and social practice at the end of this Introduction, the two concepts that I use to simplify this complexity. As I show the role of the self-discovery groups in the production of life stories, I am also producing a life story of my own. As the development of the self-discovery stories in the groups informs the members about themselves and others, my telling and production of this story here informs myself and others at the same time. This complexity is explored further when I present the signpost of reflexivity later on.

• Autobiography.

In this research I use the descriptive terms of autobiography and life stories as interchangeable. Whereas Chapter One discussed the theoretical understanding of life stories, Chapter Two turns to the description of autobiography to illustrate the practical telling. Here, autobiography is the telling of your own life stories, your own experiences, which are selected into a specific assembly of episodes to describe a particular part or aspect of your life. The link between life stories and self identity is supported further by the understanding of autobiography as bringing yourself forward into language (Benstock 1988). Therefore, it is through this bringing yourself forward into telling stories that a sense of self identity is discovered.

In the understanding of autobiography I became aware of a hyphenated dependence between the understanding of my story and the stories of others. The concept of auto/biography, evolved by the works of Liz Stanley (1992, 1993), underpins my epistemological and methodological approach. I originally hoped that the recognition of this hyphenated connection would enable me to keep myself as a visible narrator throughout the text. Through this visibility, I would be able to counteract many of the dilemmas that feminist and interactionist qualitative studies had previously identified, concerning the contradictions of being a researcher and simultaneously entering social relationships with my subjects. I hoped that auto/biography would enable me to keep my research in this social relationship. Yet I found that this visibility created many different problems between being there, in the field, and being here, writing up. At all stages the visibility of myself as narrator confirmed that the stories from others became mine, especially through the demands of analysis and writing up. It is my selection and organisation of narratives that form this research. Central to the understanding of self-identity stories is the concept of reflexivity. Reflexivity is the self examination process that the individual engages to tell their story. Reflexivity is also the process that the researcher embraces to look at the production of the research story.

- **Reflexivity.**

Reflexivity is recognised as the link between telling stories and the production of self awareness through self examination that fosters a sense of self, a formation of self-identity. Thus, in the psychotherapies, reflexivity becomes a systematic body of knowledge supported by the vast arrangement of schools and approaches developed from Freud's seminal publications on analysis. Some key social theorists suggest that modern day life has fostered this reflexive way of knowing, (Bourdieu 1990, Giddens 1991, Lash & Friedman 1992) and the development of the psychotherapies has been a main constituent in forming this awareness. It appears to me that, in the many social theories that use this notion of reflexivity, there are two positions: those who operate the understanding of reflexivity in retrospect, via the deconstruction of textual representation of ways of knowing (Atkinson 1990 Woolgar 1988. Okely & Callaway 1992) and those who explore the use of reflexivity in everyday

understanding. This is illustrated in many ethnomethodological and feminist works. In this everyday understanding, reflexivity becomes a way of telling about yourself, the project of the self as posed by Giddens (1991). I have struggled to bring these two positions together in my practice and understanding of reflexivity. Firstly, I seek to acknowledge the construction of stories that produce a sense of self and the social role this plays in the psychotherapeutic setting. Secondly, I want to echo this reflexive process in the telling of my research story, the production of my text. In trying to present reflexive social research, I use an auto/biographical style that brings forward my reflections on how this story is produced. This attempts to deconstruct my own assembly of episodes and interpretation that I make in telling this story. Hence the research process is argued to be the awareness of this reflexivity in my research relationships, my writing style and the development of my own sociological identity. Therefore, the understanding of reflexivity is constantly sought throughout this thesis and it is frequently evident that the understanding of reflexivity returns to the explanation of negotiation that occurs at all times to enable the individual to arrive at ways of knowing.

- **Identity.**

Identity is used to bring all these areas so far described into focus. Identity is the end product of reflexive self awareness and self examination; it is the assembly and organisation of experiences; it is presenting and knowing a sense of your own individuality. I add to this definition of identity the idea that the presentation of any sense of individuality will illustrate the actuality of choices posed by Benhabib (1992), and continued in the work of Griffiths (1995). It is the actuality of choices that enables this knowing to be explored in relation to the many influences and opportunities that are available or denied to the individual. Hence the actuality of choices becomes how it is assembled into the individual's own way of telling, their way of knowing. This actuality of choices enables the exploration of both limitations and freedom in formulating an individual's story. A key characteristic of sociological inquiry is to explore the limits and opportunities in ways of knowing. This conception of identity places ways of knowing and the production of knowledge into many networks, the social relationships that the individual interacts within, and the

influences that can be observed in a wider setting. Hence, learning about and understanding social life comes to be described as a complex arrangement of interaction and context. The complexity of looking at individual ways of knowing in a social context has been described by social theorists in such terms as: weaving, spinning, and fusing (Alexander 1987, Benhabib 1992, Widdershoven 1993). In Chapter One I highlight these descriptions to illustrate how sociology attempts to explore the connections and interdependencies that ways of knowing involve. I find such descriptions very applicable to my approach in telling stories, as the revelation of self-identity through such telling demonstrates the “actuality of choices” (Benhabib 1992) that the individual finds her or himself immersed within. Part Two of the research presents the self-discovery stories from the groups that are made possible through such weaving, fusing and spinning activities shown in the social practices of story telling of the groups. This highlights the fundamental debate of explanation employed throughout the thesis, the debate of constructionalism and essentialism, to which I allocate another signpost later on.

I cannot discuss identity here without its association with self. Identity can be seen as individuality, personhood, consciousness as I discuss in Chapter One, but the presentation of self-identity in this thesis is not without thought. It entails the recognition of the importance and prevalence of self in this psychotherapeutic expression and in many social theories.

- **Self.**

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I draw all the self-discovery themes and the social theories I have discussed together, to show their dependence upon a conception of self. As this research looks at the practice of such conceptions in the self discovery groups, the empirical basis reveals how a theoretical concept of self may reflect or contrast with the sense of self described as experienced in the groups. This is explored through the explanations of essentialism and constructionalism, which I discuss in the next signpost. Here I draw forward the psychoanalytical concept of self, and its incorporation into the more generalised world of psychotherapeutic theories and practices in the alternative therapy setting. I introduce in Chapter One the idea that psychotherapy promotes a concept of self that

is open to change. Whichever psychoanalytical theory is adopted, the everyday practice of this theory is to promote change by understanding yourself. I identify this possibility of change proposed in therapy as the recognition of reflexivity, explained as an inner conversation that negotiates and discovers new ways of knowing and understanding. The story telling analysis applied to the self-discovery stories presents this negotiation of possible change. It is this recognition of inner dialogue that echoes similar social explanations of the self. The sociological concept of a social self depends upon this self in constant negotiation with the outside world (Burkitt 1991). I conclude here that conceptions of the self encapsulate many levels of negotiation both within and without each individual. For example the term 'self-in-dialogue' is one way of explaining the process of reflexivity. This negotiation, whether it is called dialogue or reflexivity, is the nucleus of interactionist sociology and is clarified through the development of exploring story telling, because it is the way that the individual makes sense of their experiences.

I also present another conclusion, which depends upon this concept of the self becoming a central character in the way that the story is told. This is discussed by showing the similar narrative structures that reveal a success story and the use of a metaphorical self. All conceptions and senses of self depend upon being described in infinite possibilities. Here, 'the self' becomes a universal signifier where many meanings are brought together and contained. Metaphors of 'the self' transform the meanings from one thing to another. In presenting this metaphorical use of the self, I am able to show how "the self" is more than "myself". In this way, the reconstructed self-identity stories I present here achieve their coherence and connection, as this metaphorical self can be abstracted to bring forward a variety of different reference points, from personal relationships to a spiritual connection with the universe.

I end this exploration of a metaphorical self by returning to myself. I have learnt from these groups the concept of an inner self and the experience of emotions to reveal these inner feelings. Hence I am aware of myself in dialogue on another level, by listening to a feeling content not just to my thoughts. The self-in-dialogue resonates with my own experiences of self: I have inner conversations everyday, and I can only begin to make sense of it all by creating my own stories. Hence at the end of the day my sense of self is my feelings of who, how and where I see myself. These

feelings are shown in the stories I tell to others about myself and my experiences, and these stories continue to inform me about myself. This final conclusion highlights the constant debate engaged in this thesis, the sociological concerns of constructionalism versus essentialism. How much social shaping is an inner dialogue subjected to? Is subjectivity social or does it imply some sense of uniqueness?

• **An Inner Self versus a Social Self.**

This debate is revealed in Part Two of the thesis in the nature of the self-discovery stories told by the facilitators and the members of the groups. The self-discovery stories define and describe the experiences of an inner, core, essential self that is placed in direct contrast with a social self perceived to be false, materialistic and superficial. Thus the inner self becomes a new way of knowing and understanding yourself, others and the social world. I interpret this story as the story of salvation that promises to free a trapped self. This story of salvation emphasises the continuous possibility of creating new meanings to give a story of coherence and unity, which connects individuals with a different way of seeing themselves, with a hope for positive change, for the individual and the world as a whole.

The acquisition of such a story and the group processes involved suggest that this essential belief is itself another social construction. It enters the analysis and explanation of how the actuality of choices to develop self-identity stories is governed and shaped. Notions of an essential self and varying continuums of how a sense of self is socially constructed is a central debate in social theoretical explanations of identity concerning modernity and postmodernity. Both areas present varying descriptions of the degree to which autonomy and control, limitations and freedom, constraints and choice enter our social explanations. From the theories that propose a continuing culture of individualisation that is detrimental to social and communal life, I look at the social change associated with the description of modernity. (Lasch 1979, 1985, 1991). This is reflected by the works that argue an ever increasing role played by the rise of therapy in advancing an individualistic culture (Reiff 1966, Illich 1975). In the postmodern deconstructionalist debate this becomes the description of surveillance and governance of subjectivity, where there

is no such thing as a self but the inscription upon the surface. (Foucault 1984,1986, 1988, Rose 1991)

In contrast to this view of detrimental change and increasing governance, the growth of psychotherapeutic interest is identified as offering a resolution to change and transience in this modern social world. This is explained by Giddens (1991) as the lay reception of knowledge where more people have more access to expert information and are able to operate their own interpretations. From this increasing availability of knowledge and the psychotherapeutic promise of change the individual is given a sense of autonomy and authority for the life stories developed. In post modernity this increasing acceptance of knowledge is perceived as the opportunity for multiple stories with many interpretations, a challenge to dominant stories (Smart 1993). It is from this debate that the opposing ends of the continuum are shown, the 'authorial self' that writes its own story is in paradox to a 'no self', where any feelings of self are understood as an inscription upon a surface. This inscription perceives the essential self as a romantic myth and the practice of the psychotherapies as the telling of this romantic story. When seeking to explain the dependence of therapy upon an essential inner self the complexity of understanding emotional expression is explored. Emotions in the therapeutic frame are perceived as a direct spontaneous expression of some inner authentic self. This explanation denies the social relations of how, where and why emotions are communicated. How do we form our life stories? Do we organise our experiences into a sense of continuity because we have to or because we want to? I return to the complexity of exploring the weaving, binding and spinning descriptions of how the individual constitutes and constructs ways of knowing. The self-discovery story can be placed in every position along this essential/constructionalist continuum. This permits the complexity of my conclusions that arrive at three different positions.

The self-in-dialogue, the negotiation of the many levels of understanding in modern day social life. The production of this self-in-dialogue through metaphorical licence where "the self" becomes more than "myself". Finally I can not ignore that I am left with myself, my experiences, my feelings, my self-identity and my sociological identity that has been shaped by others and myself. I have devised two heuristic concepts: framing and social practice, to help me explore these influences.

- **Framing and social practice**

To continue this exploration of ways of knowing and the production of knowledge in telling stories, I define framing and social practice as the following: Framing signifies the understanding and explanations presented in the stories told, the themes of the story. For instance, this thesis is framed by my learning and selection of various sociological explanations. Social Practice is the social context in which this learning and selection takes place for instance the Oxford Brookes University, the sociology field, my relationship with my supervisors. This is to recognise the integral dynamic relationship between: the themes and the structure of the story, the content and the social relations of telling and listening, the knowledge and praxis. The descriptions of weaving, fusing, and spinning, used to illustrate the production of knowledge within a network of influences is shown through my use of framing and social practice.

Framing and social practice are the yin and yang of sociology where, hopefully, a dichotomy is avoided, but the descriptive analysis of this division explores how ways of knowing construct maintain and produce new relationships and beliefs. This framing and social practice enters into my own reflections on my way of producing this sociological interpretation. I have presented this awareness by structuring the thesis into three sections. Part One: the research story, Part Two: the therapy story, Part Three: the wider story. Each section illustrates the three main constitutive stages in producing this research. Within each section I use the concepts of framing and social practice to highlight the many levels of construction. For example, in Part One, I use the understanding of framing to show how I developed the question. The second chapter then looks at the social practice, the methodological issues of exploring this question. Although neither can be drawn so precisely, the practice of the methodology I chose reflects my framing of how I wanted to evolve my position. The framing and social practice of methodology and analysis identifies the stages of being there in the field and being here, writing up. In other words I try to recognise where my ways of knowing are coming from. In Part Two, the therapy story is the end product of the analysis. Here my way of knowing is produced by my analysis of others' stories. The final part, the wider story, is where the framing and the social

practice of sociology comes to the fore in my explanations and discussion of possible conclusions. Consequently my terms of framing and social practice seek to explore the complex process of reflexivity.

In contrast to the process of reflexivity, my distinction of framing and social practice in story telling has also helped me to observe more than just listening to the stories told.

• **Belonging.**

The distinction of social practice brings forward yet another important conclusion that could have remain hidden if I had just listened to the stories told. The value of this research was my participation, my membership in the groups. While I have been able to analyse the groups as promoting the strategies of story telling, there is another level that remains a physical presence. This is observed as the hugging, the physical support, and the use of the body to release feelings. The physical contact between members were observed in all the groups, but it was not described in any detail in the interview stories. I have highlighted this physical presence in Chapter Four, with photographs taken at one of the groups. I argue that this physical proximity was essential for creating a sense of belonging and it is this belonging that enables the sharing of the self-discovery story. It is this belonging that may be a central issue in producing ways of knowing.

I have reached the end of the Introduction and my selection of signposts. I hope that this will provide you, the reader, with a clear direction to simplify the many layers and levels that this story of stories presents. I have not given this direction as a straight-forward route, but one that will hopefully provide a sense of direction.

Part One

The Research Story.

Part one is the beginning of my research experience. Here I look at how I formed the question and how I sought to find the answers. It was a new and exciting life for me, I really felt that my life was changing. I had discovered sociology during my early thirties and had completed a part-time degree course. This was an experience of success, I found out that sociology made sense of my world. Furthermore, I could actually do well at presenting my understanding. Now, everything appeared to be fitting into place. I had a chance to complete a PhD and teach. A dream of mine held for many years, what more could I want? This dream only represents a part of my life, my dreams and hopes come in episodes that I seek to assemble together into the whole. Within my hopes and dreams for the future was also the want and need for a relationship. My marriage had ended. I had returned to live in Oxford. I was looking for something else. I had found a new satisfaction in my work and environment. I was meeting new friends, mainly other single parents. I had also found a new freedom when the children went to stay with their father. During these weekends I was able to focus upon something totally different and I attended a Shiatsu course, that is a form of Japanese massage. This brought me new friends in a new context. It also provided me with a new way to relate to other friends as I shared my new interest with them. Developing this new "me" continued as I left my work as an occupational therapist and took on my role as post graduate teaching assistant (PGTA). This developing new "me" gave me a tremendous sense of everything finally coming together, all the things that I wanted. I was beginning to make new friends and bring these different groups of friends together. I remember a party I had at my house in the summer of 1992, old friends and new friends from my shiatsu group, my research contacts and my work. It all seemed so good. It was a good party. This was my envisaged good life that I hoped for, although a pause would occur when I looked beside me and wanted someone there, someone special, someone just for me, mine. Friends were mine, but shared on numerous levels. A partner would be mine on a very special intimate level, where no one else would go.

This search within myself for love and belonging after a series of life events ending with disappointment and loss, gave me a particular awareness to the research question that I eventually created. I had initially proposed a question concerning Holistic General Practitioners. At this stage in my life I was more aware of the term holism from a green ecological awareness. Directly from my social science degree this green awareness had been growing in me. Prior to applying for the post of PGTA, I had started to enquire into alternative ways of living, I had visited a community in Suffolk and was wondering if this was the life for me. The advertisement for the post in sociology requested a research proposal into health. Hence my interest in community living was put on hold as another aspect of my hopes, to continue my learning and teaching commenced. Nevertheless, I still hoped to combine this green interest in issues of health. It seemed to be the way of bringing all the different parts of me together again and I proposed that the connecting concept would be holism. This concept of holism reflected both the theoretical connection and my feeling of bringing myself together. To be green you had to be

aware of where and how you lived that included how you look after your health. Once installed as a PGTA, I started my literature search.

Here I was drawn to an understanding of self that seemed to underpin and be associated with research into alternative practices both in the health field and ecological awareness. In alternative health practices the self became a focus for a different way of understanding how to deal with health and illness problems and a different way of understanding the way social life is organised. This was symbolised by the use of the term holistic, wholeness. Everything was discussed with the theme of connection. I found all my interests being brought together, I could recognise my experience in the health field and my new interest in alternative living. During the literature search I read many studies, from the professionalisation of alternative health practices, the private provision of alternative health, the ideological battle with formal orthodox health care, the developing alternative health practices in America and Europe, the definition of alternative health, finally, resulting in a collection of some 50 references. The studies that stayed in my mind were the studies on Holistic General Practitioners in America.ⁱ The studies described a "conversion" to holistic practice, a result of personal experiences that had brought each individual to question their life, how they wanted to live their lives. To me, this was what it was all about. This research question is a result of my personal experiences, just like studies on the GP's in California that described personal life events as the turning point in their lives. The questions of who am I and how do I want to live arise from life experiences that make you feel you want to change. I found that the alternative health field depended on and created this feeling of the need to change. I found this in my personal life through my experience with shiatsu and I became aware of this area of alternative health, that had not received very much attention in the existing literature. I understood this area to be the alternative development of psychotherapy, an area of self-discovery. I was also looking for myself.

Before my final commitment to this question I attended a session of the seed groupⁱⁱ with a friend. It was all there: myself as researcher, myself as a woman looking for the possibility of relating and leading a better life. It provided me with a place to want someone special and with a research area that would be practical. So the question began its earliest formulations as alternative health and notions of self. At this stage I had no idea of what this might incorporate. My objective was just to be there. I believed that I could just go and be there and see what happened. I was also introduced to a new and exciting possibility, autobiography. I could be myself in this research. Since my early twenties I have had an awareness of feminism in understanding my life. I have always placed my female friendships as very important and enjoyed the notion of sisterhood. I was disappointed with academic feminism during my degree course. Here feminism appeared as a way of presenting a contrasting understanding instead of being assimilated into the whole understanding. In this way it always created a certain resistance with the male

ⁱ 1985. Goldstein, M. Jaffe, D. Garell, D. Berke, R.E. *Holistic Doctors: Becoming a Non-traditional Medical Practitioner*. Urban Life. 14:3. October pp317-344.

1987 Goldstein, M. Jaffe, D. Sutherland, C. Wilson, J. *Holistic Physicians: Implications for the study of the Medical Profession*. Journal of Health and Social Behaviour. 28:2. June pp103-119.

ⁱⁱ The Seed Group is introduced in chapter two, page 56.

members of the seminar group and did not appear to change the dominant way of seeing the world. I came to the conclusion that feminism preached to the converted. I wanted to reach another audience, one that would not pigeon hole me into this or that, but at the same time one that would recognise that feminism is now part of the way that I see the world and that I am a woman. My feelings of feminism were another part of myself that I had felt in conflict with in the previous years of marriage and child-care. Now through my research proposal, my work and my life style I felt I was beginning to assimilate this into my life and it was becoming a part of developing "me".

I was introduced to the term autobiography by Jane Ribbens who was leading a module in an autobiographical style and producing a paper on the uses of autobiography in sociological teaching (1993). Liz Stanley had just published "The Autobiographical I" (1992). It seemed that everything was fitting into place again. This first year of my research question and design of how to answer, was my own path of self-discovery in this research and academic world. At the same time I had an awareness of what a privileged position that I held. I set off creating my research world where I could bring myself work, interest, and friends. There was no simple dividing line between myself and the other. This was to become the research process. Welcome to my research world.

Chapter one.

Framing The Question.

Chapter one reviews the assumptions and conclusions I make to arrive at the terms in the title: **self-identity stories and alternative therapy groups.** What are such stories and how do such stories inform a sociological thesis? What sort of therapy do I infer and how is it considered alternative? Therefore the first section of this chapter reviews the social theories that surround the concept of self. It is a daunting task to review the literature that centres of any understanding of self, individuality, and self-identity. These conceptions are fundamental to many disciplines in the humanistic and social science schools of thought. However it is through such a complex review that I arrive at the position of self-identity stories. This can be shown by exploring the arguments in four related sections. Firstly the social theories of self that seek to explain how a sense of self awareness is achieved through social relations. Secondly, the philosophical connection of story telling and social life proposes that the telling of life stories is a major constituent in the production of self-identity. Here the focus upon narrative assumes that social interaction involves this notion of telling life stories, the purpose being to explain and interpret an assembly of experiences, in order to produce a coherent way of knowing about ourselves and the context in which we live. Thirdly both these areas of debate infer the essential constituent of reflexivity. It is this self examination and self reflection that informs the stories told and produces a sense of self. Lastly, returning to my first point, such a reflexive project depends upon the relational setting of the stories told. As an awareness of individuality is told through the stories, it reveals ways of knowing and understanding social life. Therefore self-identity stories are a negotiation between ourselves and others. This places self-identity stories in concrete social relations, showing how such stories are produced and consumed. To develop this ontological position of story telling into a practical sociology, I introduce and define two heuristic concepts, **framing and social practice.** The framing of the story illustrates the themes that locate the story in a particular reference or body of knowledge and the social practices demonstrate where and how

the stories are told and heard, the social processes and relations. Like many other sociologists, I am concerned with the dynamic interplay of interaction, how the outside world gets inside the individual and how this individual constructs this social world through their understanding. Self-identity stories therefore become a means of understanding the question of how an individual forms a coherent narrative that reflects the connection between theory and empiricism, thoughts and actions, freedom and constraints, autonomy and governance.

The second section of the chapter then reviews the argument that the framing and practice of the psychotherapies have an increasing importance in contemporary society. Self reflection and self examination has been a constituent of many social practices throughout many cultures and historical periods (Foucault 1986). The psychotherapies influence the practices of self reflection and self examination in a systematic body of knowledge of reflexivity applied to the understanding of individual well-being. I suggest that this evolving practice of the psychotherapies has been incorporated into a growing belief in the psychological importance of the individual in the understanding of health. I show how the psychotherapies depend upon telling stories, therefore the supposition is that a specific sort of self-identity story is constructed. The psychotherapeutic influence has added the component of the unconscious to the reflexive production of self-identity. The unconscious becomes a metaphor for the irrational and therefore understanding this irrationality has a moral element of control. I trace this moral foundation set in western psychotherapeutic culture from Christian beliefs. I end this chapter by identifying the area of alternative psychotherapeutic practice that forms the field of exploration for this thesis.

Self-identity Stories: philosophical, relational and reflexive aspects.

Social Self.

Before the complexity of self-identity stories can be explored, the literature that proposes a social self needs to be reviewed. Here it is proposed that self-identity arises from social relations. I have chosen two theorists, the seminal work of G.H.Mead and its development into Rom Harre's work, to highlight how a process of

internal negotiation is identified to constitute a sense of self, a self awareness and consciousness (Burkitt 1991). The social psychological influence of G.H. Mead is essential to note here. His explanation of a social self concerns the mediation between an inner subjective world and an outer cultural, material world. Mead was one of the first theorists to explore how this sense of self arises from the social relations that the individual engages. He proposed that self awareness only arises from society through the social organisation of communicative interaction. Therefore it is through language, the prime communicative interaction, that the individual comes to terms and makes sense of their outer world. This mediation in turn feeds back upon the individual to construct an awareness of themselves as individuals within this complex organisation of social interaction. Mead describes this mediation between two aspects of thought and feelings, The I and the Me.

'Social meanings are given a personal sense and application through the "I" that develops in the social self. This "I" can only arise in social communication, where first we get an objective sense of our own self, which is the "me". (Burkitt 1991:53).

This theory of an inner dialogue that negotiates and constructs self awareness, autonomy and identity of an individual within social relations is developed in the work of Rom Harre (Burkitt 1991). Harre describes two layers of construction that occur between a social being and a personal being. Harre makes this distinction between roles that individuals play and their own sense of inner being, reflecting the influence of Goffman's work. He proposes two worlds of reality, an expressive order where an individual can exert their own sense of who they are and how they want to be seen alongside and in conjunction with a practical order, of structured cause and effect. Like Mead, Harre continues to prioritise the purpose of communication achieved most successfully through language. It is this belief in language as the main constituent of self-identity that is followed in the philosophical attention towards narrative.

The philosophical connection of story telling and social life.

The research title commences from the assumption that social life is made up of numerous and continuous stories that each person might use to construct a variety of possible meanings and understandings of themselves and their

relationships. This assumption arises from the increasing debate in philosophy, the humanistic and social science disciplines concerning narrative. The main philosophical debate on narrative emphasizes the importance of linking narratives to create a sense of unity and connection (Ricoeur 1992, Taylor 1989, MacIntyre 1985), which is argued to be vital to any sense of individuality. In the social sciences the debate on narrative is extended by looking at how this individuality is negotiated between the inside subjective experience and the social relations that exist (Sommers 1994, Bruner 1995, Josselson and Leiblich 1993). Academic attention to narrative focuses upon listening to what people say about themselves and such an approach is indebted to the theoretical developments of feminism, phenomenology, language philosophy and symbolic interactionism. The accumulation of such theoretical developments enable me to propose that each individual is involved in the process of understanding who, what, why, and how, through the explanation and interpretation of experiences that are told and retold. It is the selection, organisation and assembly of narratives that becomes the story, and this engages the process of reflexivity, constantly reviewed and reinterpreted. Therefore I make several major proposals through this understanding of story telling. Firstly that social life is constructed by stories, secondly that such stories are necessary to construct a sense of self and lastly that these stories reveal this connection between self and social life. I hope to now expand upon these ideas.

The idea that social life is storied raises a familiar dilemma in the understanding of social life. How much of the story is shaped by the outside world and how is the outside world shaped by the story produced by the individual? In the "Narrative Study of Lives", Guy Widdershoven combines three philosophical debates, phenomenology, hermeneutics and language to develop an ontology of "The story of Life". He discusses the works of MacIntyre, Ricoeur and Merleau-Ponty. (1993) I intend to follow this example drawing upon Widdershoven's work and some of the original sources.

An important influence in this world of story telling is the philosophical work of Alasdair MacIntyre (1985). Widdershoven clarifies the hermeneutic emphasis made in MacIntyre's work as: "...the meaning of life is dependent upon the stories that surround it" (1993:4). MacIntyre proposes that there are stories of life,

constructed and maintained by the historical and institutional development of social practices. MacIntyre perceives the continuation of institutionalised stories through the development of social rules to facilitate co-operation and cohesion and to preserve the standards of the practice. He refers to these institutionalised stories as scripts that structure individual meanings. Therefore life stories surround the individual on an institutional level that affects the way that individuals explain and interpret their own life experiences. According to MacIntyre, each individual engages with these scripts to develop a narrative unity of life. This narrative unity permits the distinct uniqueness of each individual while at the same time echoing and confirming the structured meanings, that give a sense of coherence to the social life where the person relates.

It is important to recognise MacIntyre's notion of unity and coherence as an ethical concern. MacIntyre presents the motivation of people to develop this style of unity in telling about themselves as universal, in order to give a sense of having a "good life", of being successful. Central to this understanding is MacIntyre's concept of social practices. MacIntyre perceives social life as the enactment of stories, for example the social practice of medicine informs the patient of the expected interaction that may occur. This enactment enables the organisation of experiences to give a sense of a good life. The stringing together of narratives in a cohesive form gives an understanding of what the individual hopes for and the life events that have been achieved and this understanding can be assessed against the way that social life functions (Ricoeur 1992).

From this extremely brief synopsis of MacIntyre's work I emphasise the concept of "unity" where story telling is the location of self-identity. According to MacIntyre the concept of selfhood is the "*unity that resides in the unity of narrative that links birth to life and death*" (1985:220). Here the hermeneutic stress provides my first addition to the theories of a social self, illustrated by the works of Mead and Harre. For an individual to gain any sense of themselves they must be able to tell about their lives with some sense of continuity. I have therefore imposed my term of story upon MacIntyre's concept the unity of narratives, as I suggest that any unity of narratives necessitates themes that connect and begin to tell a story. The work of Charles Taylor is also another influential philosophical work that repeats this

essential message of each individual trying to construct her or his story that gives some sense of coherence with the need for creating a shared understanding that also becomes a search for making sense of yourself:

"what it is to be me, in order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become (who we are) and where we are going". (Taylor 1989:47)

Ricoeur describes this continuity from a different perspective, but arrives at the same conclusion of telling stories and the construction of self-identity. MacIntyre's work prioritised the stories that surround the individual, which he called the scripts, in contrast Ricoeur, like Mead and Harre, describes a sense of inner dialogue. Ricoeur proposes that there is a pre-narrative world within the individual. This supposes that each individual has access to an inner meaning, but this original meaning means nothing unless it is shared and understood by others, whereby the meaning becomes explicit. Ricoeur draws attention to this understanding of life story, not through the concept of unity, but states that a life story is an autobiographical narrative. In the telling of autobiographies the narrator is telling about themselves and this reflects back to inform the individual about themselves, the interpretation of character and narrator are one. It is from the character that the plot develops and it is the plot that consolidates knowing the character. Ricoeur argues that narration has three functions, to describe, tell and prescribe. When the character and the narrator are the same, the developing story informs the narrator about themselves. The function of prescription is very important as it serves the purpose of anticipating the future. From the work by Propp, *"The Morphology of the Folktale"*, Ricoeur notes that every plot proceeds from developing the character. In stories of life the individual becomes the character and the individual is therefore able to continue defining her characteristics as the plot of the story is told.

Like MacIntyre, Ricoeur agrees that social practices construct ready made narratives that may influence the narratives of the individual, they may provide the script so to speak, but his emphasis is firmly placed on the active interpretation of this script. Therefore the form of telling a story about yourself is the method of creating unity via an understanding of connection for yourself and in turn acts and reflects upon the stories of others. Ricoeur identifies the term used by Dilthey, *"the connectedness of life"* (1992:115).

From this review of some philosophical thoughts on storytelling and social life I am able to bring this together with the understanding of a social self. Both necessitate a constant reference to reflexivity, which is described here as the hermeneutic relation:

"Personal identity is the result of a hermeneutic relation between experience and story, in which experience elicits the story and the story articulates and thereby modifies experience. (Widdershoven 1993:9).

As the autobiographical story begins to identify the narrator it also at the same time exchanges experiences with another. It is the experiential part, the creation of a shared sense of understanding, that reflects back to become the way that the narrator of the story knows themselves, both in connection with others and to confirm a sense of self. Widdershoven develops this point by stressing the phenomenological importance of Merleau-Ponty where the activity of telling about yourselves and sharing your experiences with others changes implicit meanings to an explicit shared understanding. This process of bringing the meanings forward in an explicit form is where the connections and unity may be implied and the understanding of a sense of self-identity made clear.(1993). Thus telling stories is a method of connecting with others, and providing a sense of unity to the past, present and anticipated future of the individual's life. Therefore life stories are :

"... the idea that life and the story are internally related. This implies that life is both more and less than a story. It is more in that it is a basis for a variety of stories and it is less in that it is unfinished and unclear as long as there are no stories told about it" (Widdershoven 1993:19).

This illustrates the telling of stories as a continuous reflexive process, which is both essential for making sense of the world, while at the same time not a basic necessity for life to be continued.

Is there a universal self-identity?

I am concerned that I appear to have located this notion of the individual, and the construction of self-identity stories in a generalised, universal foundation, that arises primarily from white, male, western philosophers and psychologists. To

explore the question of individuality and self-identity, attention must be paid to many social theorists from numerous backgrounds and perspectives. From a historical, anthropological perspective, the concept of the person is central, and has been the focus of attention for many years. Mauss' seminal theory published in 1938, proposes that an understanding of individuality has evolved from an elementary conception of person to the contemporary concept of self. The self, therefore is an end product of a modern complex social system; understanding the person and the individual have been transformed by the modern understanding of reflexivity. This argument suggests that as social systems have become more complex, the definition of an individual has become more involved and many faceted, hence the concept of self implies that it can incorporate this many faceted presentation. Critiques of Mauss' evolutionary theory show how many interpretations of the self have involved a complex presentation as illustrated by the theories of self that have existed in the teachings of Buddhism and Christianity for many centuries (Carrithers et al 1985).

In many ways it appears to be primarily a question of meaning and definition. Is the person, the individual the same as the self? Modern social theories now use the term identity to illustrate a complex understanding of self. A recent anthropological study questions the use of identity and argues that this discourse of identity is a "*bourgeois hegemonic project*" (Rouse 1995: 352). Another anthropologist, Anthony Cohen (1994) has challenged the understanding of personhood and selfhood defined through identity. He develops an argument to support the term "Self Consciousness" to represent an alternative anthropology of identity. Cohen argues that it is self consciousness that remains universal to all people and that this self consciousness is our own interpretation. All social academic disciplines enter this struggle of how to deal with the subjective issues of individuality, identity, and self. The fundamental position remains that in using the concept of the self in any combination, with identity or with consciousness, I am still inquiring into the constitutive components of how the individual or person sees themselves in context. I suggest that the best way of showing how a person sees themselves is to listen to the stories they tell about themselves. This telling brings any sense of self forward and is clarified through the telling. There is a dialectic relationship at all times where the sense of self depends upon relationships with

others and the telling about this self engages another relationship with others. Hence I could conclude that self-identity is an awareness of yourself, consciousness, your thoughts, your body, your beliefs, yourself as a person, as an individual in relation and reflection to others. This awareness of yourself may be called self consciousness, it may be called personal identity, but the important point is that such identity or awareness could not exist without the relational and reflexive components. Therefore the relational and reflexive components account for the cultural and gender perspective of individuality and self. However at the same time there may possibly be a universal element in telling about your experiences to others to gain this sense of self in what ever way it presents. It is only through this telling that the experience of creating a shared understanding is felt and that this sharing brings together a connected, unified understanding to the life story of the teller.

In this way life stories are not chronological autobiographies, but are stories of life assembled from experiences. The many voices of feminism, speaking of many different lives, stress the cohesive aim of women's issues to make the stories of women visible and heard. The uncovering of unheard or neglected stories has been a central way that feminism has communicated the need to listen to different ways of understanding (Gilligan 1982, Stanley 1990). From Ann Oakley's work concerning the hidden stories of housework and childbirth, (1981) feminism has continued to move towards finding the unheard or ignored story. We are now able to draw upon the different stories of black feminism by bell hooks and working class women. (Hirsch & Keller 1990). From this development of feminism, indebted to the interactionist perspective of listening to what is being told in context, a wider understanding of identity can be gathered. As Benhabib states:

"Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of choices, namely to how I, as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life's story... The question becomes: how does this finite embodied creature constitute into a coherent narrative those episodes of choice and limitation, agency and suffering, initiative and dependence?" (1992:161)

It is this definition of self-identity, which identifies the processes of relations and reflexivity, that is central to this thesis.

Self-identity as Relational.

The philosophical connection of stories and social life, the social theories of a social self illustrate the processes of becoming aware of yourself in context with others. Here self-identity is formed through the constant dialectic relationship between the personal identity and the social-identity. I have explicitly discussed theories that support this social relational perspective. Mead's distinction of the I and Me in internal dialogue constructs self awareness as a constant interplay with social relations. Rom Harre's expressive order enables the person to show who they are or how they want to be seen, within the practical order of structured features of social life. (Burkitt 1991). These theories of how a social self is constituted reflect very similar characteristics with the proposed connection that life stories bring. All these theories suggest that the awareness of a sense of self depends upon the relationship of being in an interactive social world. Hence I arrive at the conclusion that all social theories of self converge on the understanding of mediation between the social world and the personal world, the inside and the outside, where individual consciousness occurs as it arises out of social relations.

Self-identity as Reflexive.

Once the relational self is identified, social theorists have developed many ways of describing the complexity of this relationship. Central to understanding this complexity is reflexivity. The self is the internal dialogue of each individual, but each internal dialogue informs the interaction that takes place with others. Thus self-identity stories are at all times a social relation even though their content is about the uniqueness of that specific person's identity, unity and connection.

The work of Antony Giddens expresses the argument that a main characteristic of contemporary western social life requires the individual to understand herself and others through the engagement of reflexivity. (Giddens 1990, 1991 & 1992). In other words individuals must be able to reflect back upon experiences and tell about themselves in order for any perception of individuality to continue. The above connection with hermeneutic, phenomenological and linguistic philosophy all demonstrate how the individual tells about their life, their

experiences. Through the telling of life stories, the narrator becomes the character identified in the story therefore an understanding of themselves as an individual is achieved. As Ricoeur states,

"we individualise only if we have conceptualised. We individualise with a view to describe more". (1992:28)

Giddens (1991) proposes the self is routinely created and sustained through reflexivity it is this reflexive project that constructs the self and is understood by the person through their own biography. The process of reflexivity needs dialogue and as I have discussed, this takes place both within and externally. Reflexivity is the production of a way of knowing, of making sense, and this knowing depends upon the self examination and self reflection of yourself in relations. Therefore reflexivity does not close in upon itself but engages with all ways of knowing and understanding. Reflexivity enables the layering of knowledge to be examined, thus considering the structural aspects of power that are associated with any knowing.

This recognition of power and knowledge from Foucault's work is central to the deconstructionalist perspective that has been progressed in the social sciences. (Foucault 1967, 1979). The influence of this approach in the deconstruction of the text is discussed in Chapter Two. In association with theories of self, Foucault's analysis enables the exploration of discourse and agency. This is incorporated into Giddens' work to describe the dynamic relationship between different layers of knowledge. Institutional reflexivity, the incorporation of new knowledge and information into environments of action, is contrasted with personal reflexivity, the ways that individuals come to know their own sense of identity. This incorporation of levels of knowing explores the acquisition of knowledge and information as the constant reinterpretation and reconstruction. The reflexive process that examines the ways of knowing on many layers can be observed in the descriptive terms such as *"weave"* as noted in Alexander's *"weave into local frames of reference"*, (1992) or fuse as in Gadamer's *"fusion of horizons"* (Widdershoven 1993:13) or as the many connections and possible paths observed in a web, *"web of narratives"* (Benhabib 1992: 198) *"web of identity"* (Griffiths 1995). In addition Rom Harre refers to *"locally validated Theories"* (Morris 1994:13), and Dorothy Smith refers to *"situated knowledge"* (Smith 1989: 34). These describe how the individual engages

with the production of knowledge to reflexively interpret and reorder their own production of their story and how vice versa, the telling of this story engages with the production of a wider story. Therefore from this review I conclude that a positive outcome of looking at stories is the way that the wider setting can be engaged through the reflexive appropriation of knowledge and the social relations that present the concrete structures for where and how this story is told. As Ken Plummer's shows in his invitation to a "Sociology of Stories", sociology can explore the ways that individuals understand their lives and how they link this with the social networks they engage, where knowledge may be formed in particular familiarity. The social nature of story telling involves: *"a stream of joint actions in local contexts, themselves bound into wider negotiated worlds"*. (1995: 24) In this thesis I hope to demonstrate this wider negotiated world, using the heuristic concepts of social practices and framing that each individual engages in their understanding. Story telling brings forward the recognition of how this negotiation of binding, weaving and fusion occurs in the organisation and assembly of narratives from an inner dialogue to the telling for an audience or in other words the framing and the social practice of the story. This returns to my concluding definition of identity proposed by Benhabib and used by Griffiths in her discussion of the web of identity (1995). The question becomes, how do individuals establish a sense of cohesion, connection, unity and coherence from the stories that they tell. The sociological answer is to look at the processes of reflexivity, the way of knowing in the context of social relations.

Ways of Knowing.

Framing the Story. (The Themes of the Story)

This concept of the framing is drawn from Goffman's work. Here I have replaced Goffman's dramaturgical imagery of front stage, backstage, and the analytical concepts used from the film industry such as "strip", "keying" (1986) with concepts from the understanding of stories, such as my use of themes. I propose that the framing of the story is the knowledge used to select and explain experiences into a flowing account that produces the story. Here I suggest that although this framing of life stories may be complex with multiple layers of interrelated themes, major or

key themes are still identifiable that permit the narrative assembly to become a story. For example the stories told in this research have been framed by the notion of self-discovery. From this framing I am able to explore what knowledge informs their understanding of self discovery.

Social Practices (Where and how the story is told.)

The term social practices is used to denote processes of interactions, developed in a social context that constructs the expected organisation of the practice. These are the contexts through which meanings are produced. Understanding what is a social practice comes from a vast sociological history where social theories describe a physical, material sense of a reality outside of the individual. Descriptions such as social systems and social organisation can be used to imply the structure of the social practice. This produces the familiarity of the institutional organisation of social groups found at work, home and leisure areas of life. Therefore social practices maintain the expected regular pattern of interactional exchanges.

"Thus the meanings constructed within a situation are developed along the way the social events of this situation are organised" (Goffman 1986:16).

Creating this separation between framing and social practice I have, like many other social theorists, developed a distinction between knowledge and practice to help discover how the self-identity stories are constituted and constructed in this specific research setting. Here framing the story and the social practice of story telling have a continuous dialectic relationship where the story told reflects both the situated knowledge that informs the individual story and the individual autonomy of authorship, that combines with the relationships that occur when such a story is told. This is the importance of storytelling for sociology, it provides a clear identification of sociological inquiry, the constant interplay between the individual and society. As I identified in the relational/ reflexive properties of the self it is the constant dialogue within the individual and between others, which forms any sense of self identity. This perspective of story telling reflects how the individual knows themselves and how this knowing is influenced. The social practice of where and how the story is told also informs another practical level, the face to face interaction of telling the story. Here the telling of the story binds, fuses and weaves yet another web of

relations that use this knowledge to accept and belong to this specific practice. This complex association of framing and social practice is shown in detail in the analysis that form chapters three, four five and six. Although I continue to use the distinction between framing and social practice I also emphasise that the combination of the two is integral. I have created such a distinction to explore how the telling of life stories constitutes and constructs the process of structuration, the yin and yang of sociology. One does not exist without the other, they complement each other in every formation and in each, the other is found.

Reflection

Before I enter the second section of this chapter I wish to reflect upon a wider setting of my framing and social practice. Why have I sought to frame this research in a web of knowledge and a series of social practices that I define under the descriptive category of psychotherapy? What does such an understanding of therapy imply? Firstly there was the job specification that I introduced in the beginning of Part One. My PGTA post was in the sociology of health. Some of the funding for this post came from the school of health. The psychotherapies can easily fit into the understanding of health, hence the frame and social practice of sociological health is appeased. Underneath this is a whole assembly of experiences that I draw upon to tell about myself in this frame and practice. It is simpler to present some of these experiences in a chronological order. My mother was a long term patient of the National Health Service. She had an unusual blood disorder that a specialist in Oxford, over many years, was able to control. Despite this I do not remember my mother as ill, she was an active, healthy woman, but she constantly had episodes of major life threatening problems that she fought. This fight brought her into contact with the full range of technological advancement in the NHS. In her later years this accumulated in the fight against cancer. Therefore my familiarity with health and illness in early childhood may well have influenced my choice to train as an Occupational therapist. It was during this training that I came across a whole new understanding of mental health and the psychotherapeutic approach. My new training in this field made me aware of problems I experienced in later life. Like many other families, I have not escaped contact with mental health problems, my brother and father have experienced mental health problems that have been defined by the psychiatric health professional. Outside of this formal health care model, in the psychotherapeutic understanding, I also became aware that my family life was fraught with relationship patterns that gave rise to experiences of blaming and suppressed anger. This autobiographical tale presents a brief but bleak picture, it sounds too awful to be true, but the other side of this coin was that my family had times of fun, love and a feeling of being close. I would describe my family as very normal and ordinary, my understanding of other families is that they experienced

shared similar life events. My childhood attendances with my mum at hospital appointments, my training in a new way of seeing mental health, finally accumulate in myself seeing a psychotherapist. I did so to help understand and overcome the breakdown of my marriage. I conclude that these issues of health and illness on all levels are part of my life, are part of who I am and have given me a new way of knowing the world and myself.

The Psychotherapies and Modernity.

The second part of this chapter reviews the argument that the development of psychotherapy and counselling in contemporary western society has played an increasing role in using reflexivity as a system to reconstruct self-identity stories. I use the term psychotherapies and counselling to define a broad and inclusive area of knowledge that promotes the possibility of finding a different self or of understanding yourself in a new way. To avoid repeating the word counselling every time, I use the term psychotherapies to include counselling.

During my discussion of the psychotherapies I introduce the sociological concept of Late Modernity. I have taken this concept primarily from the work of Anthony Giddens. (1990). The proposed characteristics of such a defined historical period are discussed in the concluding chapters of this thesis and form a central part of the debate that suggests a problematic construction of self-identity in modern western culture. To introduce this sociological concept of Late Modernity here, I emphasise that this period is also integral my life story. For me, Late Modernity is the period of social change that I have experienced through my parents and continue to experience through myself and my children. I have personal experiences of the many changes that this historical period has brought to my life and it is these experiences that I assemble into my stories of life: from my family's first television to my son's CD game station: from my parents marriage to my divorce. The list could continue, but what I am suggesting here is that my experiences of these social changes inform my life stories and therefore construct my self-identity. I am not alone in this; from sharing life stories with friends, students colleagues and family, I conclude that such changes are apart of many peoples' lives. During this period of Late Modernity I argue that there is a combination of two general cultural descriptions, the reflexive and the therapeutic culture, that has taught and

encouraged me to become self aware of who I am and how I am living. In other words the framing and the practice of my life stories have changed. I argue that central to this development are the psychotherapies. I argue that the therapeutic culture in late modernity depends upon the embodiment of the psychotherapies into the telling of life stories.

The Psychotherapies.

I have selected from the literature two main arguments to suggest that psychotherapy has developed its theoretical basis and increased its accessibility, through the rise of psychology as a subject studied in higher education (Gergen 1991), and the growth of medical practices. The literature predominantly comes from texts published in this country, France and North America, therefore illustrating a part of Western Culture. (Craib 1989, Elliot 1992, Gergen 1991, Rustin 1991, Hillman & Ventura 1992). I then place this increasing psychotherapeutic influence against a Christian foundation. This foundation illustrates many similarities shown in the search for an essential self and the function of social control through a continued expression of morality.

A Developed Self.

Within the last hundred years the growth and acceptance of psychology in higher education has experienced a rapid rise, becoming the most popular subject chosen by students (Gergen 1991). The most influential area, which has appeared in the understanding of childhood, is developmental psychology. Theories of how cognition, morality, social behaviour and parenting are developed during these childhood stages are illustrated by the well known theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, and Bowlby respectively. This notion of development depends upon the ideal construction of stages. Freud's theory of psychosexual development that underpins the psychoanalytical approach is based on this understanding of moving through different stages that have to seek some resolution to promote psychological health. Hence the psychological and psychoanalytical presentation of development is reflected in the use of the psychotherapies. In the psychotherapies this movement through stages is to promote a "developed self" (Craib 1989:198). A developed self

implies that each stage of an individual's development is never successfully completed in an ideal sense, but that the individual must resolve each stage in such a way that is satisfactory to themselves. This satisfaction is seen as the competent mediation between the inner and outer worlds, that is coming to terms with who you are and how you live. I suggest that it is this understanding of a developed self that has entered the general description of the psychotherapies.

The psychotherapies converge in a belief of repression, that is keeping something inside, which prevents a satisfactory resolution at the stage of development. In many theories, this repression is perceived to be the result of unresolved conflict in the early developmental years. Each theory differs in its explanation of this childhood repression, with differing emphases ranging from the parental roles to the shaping of a capitalist society (Elliot 1992). Irrespective of the different theories of repression, all explanations involve a notion of development. It is assumed that each individual goes through a series of stages of psychological growth.

This psychotherapeutic understanding of a developed self has a vast body of knowledge that can be used to interpret different aspects of development. Firstly there are the psychoanalytical theories that look at the complexity of the unconscious conscious relationship within the individual. Secondly there are many feminist contributions and critiques that show how this developed self is gendered. I will briefly mention this theoretical background as it complements and contrasts the psychotherapeutic framing and practice observed in the alternative therapy groups.

Psychoanalytical stories of self.

The objective of psychoanalytical theories is to present an explanatory framework to understand the complexity of the unconscious. From Freud's understanding of the unconscious, constructed by the relationship between the id, ego and superego, recent psychoanalytical theories of Lacan and Kristeva present similar layers of construction that identify different elements of an inner dialogue. (Craib 1989, Elliot 1992). Lacan's mirror stage emphasises the interplay of reflections between the inner and outer lives of the individual by describing

imaginary and symbolic worlds that exist both within the individual, and therefore actively construct the outer, real world. Kristeva proposes a psychoanalytical theory that also describes many layers in this inner world. Here the individual moves from a pre-social, semiotic stage where meanings are not yet defined in relation to the external world (Craib 1989). Kristeva's theory has had a great impact in understanding gender identification as she proposes that the female interpretation of experiences is found in this semiotic stage. Therefore it is of no surprise that women's explanations find it hard to become explicit in the thetic, symbolic world where the masculine meanings achieve dominance (Coole 1995). Both are very detailed theories and I do not seek to do justice to such complex explanations, but the important characteristic is that they imply many levels of inner dialogue and a description of moving between these different worlds for the individual to make sense of their own subjective experiences. Irrespective of the complexity of these psychoanalytical explanations, my attempt here is to show how such theories have added many layers of understanding onto the inner dialogue identified earlier in the theories of a social self identified by Mead and Harre.

In understanding the social self as the social construction of identity I arrived at Benhabib's definition, which brings forward the complexity of issues that criss-cross around the experiences told in life stories and in turn produces a sense of self. Feminist theories have highlighted how the explanations of a developed self do not appreciate or acknowledge the gender or cultural identification of the individual. From Juliet Mitchell's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis to Nancy Chodorow's work that shows how gender identification occurs in the psychic assimilation of the parenting roles found in our culture, feminists have added and contributed to understanding a gendered self (Mitchell 1986, Chodorow 1978). Within this understanding there is another recognition that links with Kristeva's work, that women may have a different voice, a different way of assessing and telling about their experiences. This is illustrated in Carol Gilligan's research that shows how women explain their morality in a different way than that proposed by the male psychologist Kohlberg. (1982) Therefore any notion of development must take into account the gender identification of the individual concerned, as this is argued to be so deep rooted that it is essential to any construction of self-identity. (Coole 1995).

The diverse and different schools of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, developed from Freud's seminal theories, to the general use of counselling, all converge in the assumption of a basic, essential self. (Gergen 1991). I suggest that the growth of the psychotherapies has formed a distinct way of knowing that places the self at the centre of its understanding. Therefore reflexivity, the ability to reflect upon past experiences and reinterpret them, has become a systematic body of knowledge, presented in the psychotherapeutic field. (Eagleton 1989). The central tenets of the psychotherapies are:

- The emphasis upon the unconscious in understanding ourselves. What we do, the way we feel, the emotions we express, all demonstrate something inside of us, an inner depth. This inner depth is represented by the concept of repression, something is being kept down and that may be a problem.
- This uncovering and understanding of this unconscious, this inner depth, has developed into systematic theory that depends upon self-reflection, self examination. Looking at yourself and exploring yourself asking yourself why, how and what.
- This self examination is brought forward into language, it is through language that this inner depth is made explicit, that also brings this communication into an interaction with the person and the listener.

The psychotherapeutic identification of a developed self also includes the recognition of a relational self, that I described in the philosophical link of story telling and life. The understanding of "development" could not occur without social relationships and the social context. The psychotherapies present this understanding of a relational self in a different perspective. All the experiences of relationships remain inside the person and the psychotherapeutic promise states that each individual has the potential to examine and interpret these experiences. The objective of the psychotherapies is to retell these experiences to create a new self, described by such terms such as an "actualised" or "realised" self. (DeYoung 1976) Such descriptions of a developed self show a definite method of finding that possibility of change for each individual by reconstructing the stages and undoing the repression. These psychoanalytical theories of self have informed and continue to construct the broad development of the psychotherapies. Because the practices of the

psychotherapies are able to draw upon psychoanalytical explanatory frameworks in a general way, the psychotherapies have a specific ease to incorporate all aspects of this developed self. Retelling the experiences of your life does not depend upon returning to the complex explanations of Lacan or Kristeva but remain more simply in the telling of your story that presents the possibility of new interpretations. Retelling the experiences of your life involves the relationship with the listener and although this listener may be trained in a particular interpretative school, the relationship is at all times a social relationship set in specific context.

It is the psychotherapeutic ease of incorporating the belief in the essential self in a social practice that makes this promise of possible change so plausible. This possible change to the individual is promised as a positive change, where the person benefits from an increased and improved self awareness. I firstly suggest that this promise has been made more available through the growth of medicine and the corresponding understanding of health.

An exploration of psychological health.

The notion of a therapeutic culture is indebted to the rise of medicine as a profession and the inclusion of social and psychological factors into this medical understanding (Illich 1975, Armstrong 1987). Here, the individual assessment of positive change and an improved life became increasingly associated with understanding psychological health in modern western culture. The understanding of health has received increasing political, public and academic attention in the post war years in this country. The conception and practice of a National Health Service clearly demonstrated and defined an understanding of health and illness and how to care for these needs.

The growth of medicine has seen a distinct recognition and use of the psychotherapies. The psychoanalytical influence in psychiatry changed some of its treatment practices from the focus of the body as the location of the problems to the mind (Prior 1991). In physical health care there was a growing recognition of the importance of an individual's psychology in the outcome and causation of illness. The term psychosomatic illnesses was recognised by Dr. Balint, a general practitioner, whose research identified the prevalence of psychosomatic

consultations and the need for the role of the GP to incorporate psychotherapy into their medical skills (Balint 1964). Increasing emphasis has been placed on the psychological explanation of illness. Social research continues to identify the importance of psychological health, the awareness of how attitudes may influence the progression of a chronic disease (Locker 1983). Recent explorations into the control of cancer suggest that the psychotherapeutic influence can make major changes to the outcome of the illness (Petrioni 1990). Adding to this work, research into the experience of illness has broadened the importance of gender, cultural and economic factors. Studies into depression and understanding health have identified the importance of social factors and their influence on psychological health (Blaxter 1990, Brown et al 1978). From such studies the medical explanation of pathology was shown to be limited and in response medical models sought to adapt and incorporate the growth of knowledge from social and psychological perspectives. As Armstrong notes, the interrelationship between physical, psychological and social factors affecting illness are recognised, but this bio-psycho-social model of illness is still subjected to a hierarchy of knowledge where the location of biological explanation receives more attention and credence. (1987).

This incorporation of psychological health into the expanding practice of medicine has been noted with some concern. The expanding conceptualisation of illness, and how this infringed on many parts of our lives, initiated concern during the 1960's when medical hegemony appeared at its highest. Authors such as Laing (1961), Illich (1975) and Reiff (1966), influenced an anti-medical and anti-psychiatric movement that perceived the role of medicine impinging into areas beyond their knowledge. The important part of this debate is that a wide range of problems may bring the individual under the "medical gaze" (Foucault 1975: 135). This is the gaze of experts, which although are no longer the preserve of the medical practitioner: sociologists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, and a vast arrangement of therapists may be involved, the proliferation of health professionals still operate under the understanding of health and illness and the social practices are frequently located under medical control. This is reflected in the WHO definition of health developed after the second world war as a *"state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"*. (The Black

report 1990: 34) Here the term well-being is developed as a synonym for health. These elements of well-being and individual needs are brought forward in the WHO concept of health as a resource for all,

"The extent to which an individual is able, on the one hand, to realise aspirations and satisfy needs and on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment. Health is therefore seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living, it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical capacities".

(The Black report 1990:223).

Within this inclusive description of health as a personal resource comes the importance of the psychotherapies. I suggest that this has produced, albeit a complex, but distinct story of how to understand a personal feeling of well-being. I may not be ill, but my life might be unhappy. This jump is but a small step into different feelings, and emotions. Therefore the psychotherapies have become a way of framing emotions.

Self-discovery as a personal resource for feeling better.

The psychological recognition of repressed needs that lay behind the resulting problem become the responsibility of the individual, and the expectation is for the individual to identify these needs and talk about them. This continues to individualise the understanding of illness as seen in the development of medicine; however the implication of self responsibility is central. There is a moral element that each person should be able to develop their own potential through this understanding of personal resources that will help them lead a better life. The development of psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic approaches has provided a professional response to help us recognise these needs in a way that enables the person to come to terms with these needs and/or realise the potential to meet these needs. It is here that the distinct connection between well-being and self-discovery is drawn through references to the repressed individual. Hence it logically follows that in order for an individual to understand herself to develop this personal resource, she must uncover this repression. Hence the advent of the psychotherapies has promised that the discovery of this repressed self promotes an improved feeling of well being. This moral foundation of developing yourself has been enabled by Christian theology that preceded this medical hegemony.

A moral foundation.

I focus upon the practice and theology of Christianity, because as I have stated, my discussion of the psychotherapies arises predominantly from the three main areas of Great Britain, France and North America. The Christian message identifies the key theme of evil and the opposing identification good. Central to Christian beliefs is the promise of recovery, from evil to good, the path of salvation can be achieved. In the initial story of the Garden of Eden the struggle between the body and the spirit identified sin as the weakness of the flesh. From this description of sin and the resulting expulsion from paradise each person should seek to find their way back the garden (Ignatief 1984). In Christianity this message of salvation became specifically linked with an individual life story. The life story of Jesus where the life story of God became an individualised human possibility. (Hillman & Ventura 1992) This moral and ethical location of personal resources, the way of becoming a better, improved and ultimately more content person, is the main theme of all the religious stories that became global religions. In Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism the moral component of the self is also central, irrespective of the different conceptions of self (Carrithers et al 1985). In western Christianity the moral message concerned private and intimate relationships, based on the conflict between a love demonstrated by spiritual love and sex perceived as the desire of the body, the struggle for control of the mind over the body is set. In this morality the identification of deviant acts is losing the struggle between the body and the spirit (Ignatief 1984). Therefore there is always part of you that has the possibility to lead you into temptation, whilst at the same time the possibility to change, to bring the rewards of a spiritual awareness, a higher morality. The social identification of deviant actions, madness and inappropriate behaviour is linked to this religious concept of evil in the works of Foucault (1967) and Szasz (1970).

The debates of enlightenment characterise the development of modernity as the increase and growth of reason and rationality through the growing body of knowledge relating to science. Christianity made such scientific rationalisation of individual problems possible as its moral theory had already located the individual as

the holder of such internal conflict. Christian theology facilitated the shift from the identification of the witch to the insane, from the responsibility of heresy to illness. (Szasz 1970) The struggle between the body and the spirit became the struggle between the unconscious/conscious mind in the developing areas of psychoanalysis. The unconscious becomes the instincts and desires, which the conscious part must understand to come to terms with the social expectations of how to satisfy these instincts and desires. Psychoanalysis is seen as an emancipatory science to eliminate the irrational, unconscious instincts of the individual (Craib 1989). Therefore Psychoanalysis took over many of the functions of social control, previously held by the established churches of Christianity, by its social channelling of destructive and constructive behaviour. For example, Christian morality is argued as a main influence in our control and suppression of sexuality in modern western culture (Foucault 1984). This continuation of this control is particularly observed in the original development of Freud's psychoanalytical explanations of sexual instincts that reflected social restrictions on sexual love (Craib 1989).

The secularisation debate is central to the notion that medicine and the psychotherapies have played an increasing moral role in western culture. Sociological theories of secularisation propose different elements of decline from Weber's concept of rationalisation to the decline of community (Dobbelaere 1984). This debate is open to many disputes as many religious groups have flourished independently from the structures of the established Christian churches (Wallis 1984). Suffice to acknowledge here that the role of the established church over this period of Late Modernity has experienced a declining political role, hence declining influence over moral education. Some social theorists argue that this moral role has been taken over by the developing practice of medicine, the priest has become the doctor. The decline in the numbers of people attending the established, formal church practice of Christianity, the demise of the parishioner role and the lack of belief, is suggested to have a direct relationship with the increasing moral role that medicine has played in our everyday lives (Bull 1990).

The Bible is a testament of peoples' life stories that show the discovery of God, through which a new sense of self is experienced. The search for an essential self is closely associated with Christian mythology (Taylor 1990). This search now

moves into the development of the psychotherapies as they continue a belief in the inner self. In Christian practice the objective is to learn how to avoid temptation, to realise the moral self as this would enable a connection with God. The psychotherapies also include the recognition of learning, that is to be educated into a better sense of self encourages each individual to find their own creativity and potential. Therefore the idea of god becomes internalised. Each tradition of psychotherapy developed since Freud has formulated the promise of a new self-identity free from this repression. Jung and Alder for instance refer to a "creative self" and C. Roger and Mallow refer to a self that can be "actualised" (DeYoung 1976:90). To achieve this promise the experts enable individuals to tell about themselves and thus uncover this area of unknown repression proposed to be held in the unconscious. In the psychotherapies the unconscious, the metaphor for the irrational, is brought within a frame of understanding by telling about your feeling and emotions and a social practice that can be shared (Bernstein 1990). This psychotherapeutic location of self-discovery as a moral resource has a direct link with self-identity stories. The psychotherapies promise change, a self transformation, by following a path of self-discovery to find a better self. Bernstein describes this practice as *"a form of theory mediated autobiography"*, that are now secular autobiographies (1990:65). Therefore the practice and framing of the psychotherapies provides a very specific moral site for the reconstruction of self-identity stories.

"The various parts of our life are not mere givens, but elements awaiting assignment within the whole. That whole, however, is ineliminably normatively structured, the whole of a life always has the sense of good and bad, a life well spent or frittered away, a life worth living or valueless. So the narrative of a life is always a moral narrative....." (Bernstein 1990:69).

Here I return to my initial introduction to the philosophy of Ricoeur and MacIntyre. Life stories are the construction of a sense of unity and connection that gives a tangible sense of self-identity, but also attempt to place a moral element into this unity, the creation of a good life, a sense of satisfaction. In the psychotherapies the reconstruction of such life stories is the positive aim of creating change within the individual, where reflexivity is a systematic body of knowledge to reflect back and reinterpret experiences into a therapeutic practice.

The Psychotherapies and Alternative Therapy.

The term therapy applies to a large number of occupations in the orthodox western medical structures. The definition of what makes something therapy is a fudged area, and as Illich notes this fudging enables the boundaries of medicine to become diffuse (1975). There is a prolific number of therapies that practice in conjunction with the medical profession, but control does exist through the registration of these occupational groups referred to as professions supplementary to medicine. The professional registration of these groups is the key to their association with medical practice. With the development of the psychotherapies, outside of the medical control, similar structures exist to demonstrate the professional accreditation of psychoanalytical, psychotherapeutic and counselling training. Recently there has been concern at the growing number of therapies outside of this professional registration as the use of the term therapy appears to be unlimited. This has resulted in a call from the E. U. for the registration of qualifications and criteria to define what constitutes a therapist (Gaier 1991).

The description of different forms of therapeutic practice that exist outside of formal health care has been described by social research as complementary, illustrated in Ursula Sharma's exploration of "Complementary Medicine Today" (1991) and Stephen Fulder. S. and R Munro's report on "Complementary Medicine in the UK: patients practitioners and consultations" (1985). The British Medical Association chose the title of Alternative Therapies in their report that examined the relevance of the therapies considered unorthodox in their relationship to the professional organisation of health care in this country. In the BMA report, the alternative therapy practices identified were Homeopathy, Manipulation, Osteopathy and Chiropractic, Acupuncture and Hypnotherapy. Apart from hypnotherapy, a practice known within the medical system, all the therapies identified are primarily physical in their orientation and suggest that these therapies are offering another form of diagnosis and treatment (Saks 1992). This physical area is also shown by a classification used by Gaier (1991). He argues that the physical practices mentioned above provide a complete system of healing, with a theory of causation, diagnostic

investigation and therapeutic treatment. This group has a distinct educational framework, training, ethical guidelines and codes of regulation and responsibility. It is this group of alternative therapies, which has received the main body of research attention, irrespective of the description of alternative or complementary. Out of twenty seven publications that I identified between 1986-1991 concerning the key terms of alternative/complementary medicine/therapy, nineteen of these focused towards this physical group of practices. Surveys confirm that these practices are receiving increasing attention and consultation rates from the public (Sharma 1991, Lewith & Aldridge 1991). The presentation of these practices that orientates their approaches towards the physical body are only one aspect of the area that can be described as alternative therapy. Their availability and accessibility for research is made possible through their developing professional organisation and registration. The Threshold survey in 1981 contacted over 11,000 therapists belonging to professional organisations but estimated that there must be double that amount of unregistered therapists. (Fulder & Munro 1985) I suggest here that there is a large area of alternative therapy that does not follow this professional line of identification.

The BMA report refers to another collection of alternative therapies under the classification of :

"Miscellaneous systems of healing"... "As a group they have much in common with the folk healers of primitive societies. They may have their roots in sacred or in secular philosophies and may now exist in traditional or modern forms" (Saks 1992:225)

The report does not identify this area of miscellaneous systems, that not only have their roots in secular or sacred philosophies, but evolve and include the psychotherapies. Gaier classifies this group as *"therapeutic modalities"* that focus upon treatment by supplementary and complementary approaches and contain a strong component of self help (1991). These terms describe a large and diffuse group that are associated with the category of therapy. Ruth West uses a classification that identifies sixty therapies. She classifies these therapies into three areas reflecting the mind body and spirit definition of alternative health.

- Therapies concerned with the Body are listed as naturopathy, herbal medicine, manipulative therapies (osteopathy, chiropractic, Alexander technique,

rolfing, reflexology), oriental therapies (shiatsu and acupressure), systems of medicine (acupuncture, homeopathy, anthroposophical medicine), exercise and movement therapies, (Tai chi, yoga, dance) and sensory therapies (music, art, colour and aromatherapy).

- In the section of the Mind the psychological therapies identified are psychotherapy, analysis, hypnotherapy, humanistic psychology (gestalt, transactional analysis, primal work, rebirthing, encounter) transpersonal psychology.

- The Spirit is identified with paranormal therapies, of healing, radionics and the paranormal diagnostic practices of palmistry, astrology and iridology (West 1992).

Using this classification of mind, body and spirit the whole alternative field of health is represented. The alternative health area has its own distinct definition of health, where health is achieved by the balance of mind, body and spirit. This definition contrasts to the official WHO definition of well-being, where the triad of physical, psychological and social well-being is altered by the introduction of this notion of spirit. The social appears to be replaced by the spiritual. As well as the change in the defining concepts there is also a distinct difference in how this triad operates within each individual. The alternative definition of health contains the central understanding of balance within each individual. A whole person is symbolised by the triad, where this wholeness is represented by the balance of this mind body and spirit interaction. The concept of holism presents a distinct challenge to the mechanistic division that has been observed in the orthodox structures (Stalker & Glymour 1989). The term therapy provides the link to show the breadth and depth of practices that can be implied in the descriptions of *"therapeutic modalities"* or *"miscellaneous systems of healing"*. By exploring this undefined area of therapies in the alternative health setting, I suggest that such modalities and systems of healing depend upon a psychotherapeutic framing, where the promise of self-discovery becomes a hope for individual change.

Hence this chapter ends with the thesis, explored in the following chapters, that self-identity stories are reconstructed in a psychotherapeutic practice that promises

self discovery as a positive change. I propose that this psychotherapeutic influence is found in an alternative practice of self-discovery found in the alternative setting of health, education and spirituality.

Chapter two.

The Social Practice of Exploration.

This chapter concerns the exploration of the research questions, the process of doing research. I locate this research in the sociology of stories (Plummer 1995), which presents two important aspects for methodology. Firstly it necessitates the design of a methodology that inquires into the substantive issue of story telling in alternative therapy groups. The how, why and where the stories are told are explored through an analysis of themes and the structure of the story, the nature of the story and the production and consumption of such stories. I argue that, how an individual tells about her/himself, the context in which it occurs and the understanding that this telling constructs, presents the means to understand the dynamic relationship between the individual and society. Secondly, I am also telling a story here and now, the analysis of the stories of others and this transforms their stories into my story of sociological research. There are many layers of this story telling which all become my own story as I am now the narrator. From this transformation I look at this auto/biographical role in the research relationships and the way that my analysis constructs a new form of story telling. In order to discuss these two interrelated parts of social research I have chosen three descriptive categories that follow the methodological path I took. The path starts with identifying how I wanted to research, which influenced how I practised research in the field, followed by the stage of analysis.

Methodology, put very simply is the process of going there, being there and then being here writing about it. In this chapter I propose to use this progression of stages to highlight the three areas. At each stage I find myself within a different framing and social practice. I argue that the purpose of showing these stages is to meet the demands of a reflexive research project. This reflexivity is the recognition of social research as a form of story telling in itself. Therefore, I am the narrator in all the stages, this is my autobiographical research story. From the identification of myself as the story teller I have been aware of how I use different parts of myself to meet the changing expectations of the research process. The first part of this chapter shows the **going there**, where I developed a clear understanding of a research

process that could remain reflexive and prioritise the subjective. The stage of going there is the academic and theoretical support gathered from the many references and different views that a new researcher comes across. I describe the methodology that I theorised and put into practice as an auto/biographical ethnography. The first part of this chapter places this auto/biographical ethnographic design into its theoretical reference.

The second part describes what happened when I tried to practice this methodological design. The complexities and contradiction of **being there** are identified. The auto/biographical story of my participation in the groups and the biographical interviews with the members and facilitators of these groups are illustrated by the hyphenated connection, auto/biography (Stanley 1992, 1993a). However the practice of this auto/biography was different from the theoretical ideas I had formulated in the stage of going there. My field notes are my autobiography, but like the interviews, I always relied on the story of others.

Being here forms the last part of this chapter. It is here that the stories from the field are transformed into the sociological research story. Hence the stage, **being here** identifies a move into another area to construct a story that is framed and practised by knowledge used in a different social context. By entering this story telling focus I am aware that the story of the groups and stories gathered from others by interviewing, becomes my story through my interpretation. By placing myself in the auto/biographical ethnography, I acknowledge that I am present and I am now the story teller. This now becomes the story of the research process, the construction of the research story. This story shows how reflexivity is applied to the creation of a research project. The hyphenated connection between the auto and the biography in the field, becomes the relationship between myself and all those involved in the research. The hyphenated connection changes during the stage of being here, this becomes the dialogue that occurs within myself where I select and organise the story told. In order to present these three interconnected areas clearly, the stages of movement from there to here are essential.

Therefore this chapter concludes that the simplistic presentation of methodological stages that I stated at the beginning of this chapter is a complex area

that a qualitative researcher must face. It becomes the story I tell from which I inform and produce my own sociological identity.

Framing what to do: going there

My stage of going there involved reviewing numerous references on qualitative methodology. From this I located my methodological style in the category of an interactionist ethnography as defined by Denzin. Here the methodological strategies are participation in the field, document analysis and interviewing. (Denzin 1989). This form of collecting data has a complex evolution, but one worth mentioning briefly as the evolution of ethnography is essential to understand how I have devised the term auto/biographical ethnography.

Ethnography.

The term ethnography originally described a method of investigation which involved the long term observation and participation of the researcher in another way of life. The researcher would describe (graphy) the social system and customs of a group of people (ethnos). This is what I set out to describe. I wanted to explore the practices of a group of people that facilitated and attended therapy groups in an alternative setting that exist outside of formal psychoanalytical and counselling provision. Originally classical ethnographic studies presented descriptions of clearly defined groups of people, unknown to the audience. The aim of the description was to represent strange and unfamiliar practices in a clear way, so that these practices were understood by the audience. Among these early ethnographic story-tellers were the well known names of Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, and Radcliffe Brown and their research conjured images of small, far off tribes. As sociology progressed, the discipline embraced the ethnographic research style, although the researchers' gaze was upon the problems occurring around them. Continuing the classic sociological tradition of the individual in conflict with the external social structures, identified in the stories of alienation by Marx, anomie by Durkheim, and disenchantment by Weber¹, social problems were identified from the changing social practices with

¹ There are many references to the works of these classical social theories including the original sources. The analysis that I have found helpful is from Giddens (1985).

growing urbanisation. This substantive focus characterised the development of the Chicago school of sociology where the stories showed areas of life previously unknown in any depth to those outside of the practices. Stories of deviancy and “low-life” presented a logical understanding of a different way of life to a new audience. The seminal study quoted to illustrate this development is *“The Polish Peasant in Europe and America”* (cited in Ribbens 1993, Burgess 1990).

This form of story telling entailed a very different narrative structure than that of the classical ethnographic style. Observation no longer claimed to be free of interpretation. From Weber to Schultz, the issues of subjectivity and meaning entered social theory. The development of phenomenology, critical theory, Wittgenstein and philosophical linguistics, all changed the nature of the research question and how we answered this question. The research question now focused upon how our daily lives are created, maintained and reproduced through the shared understanding of this subjectivity and meaning (Freidman & Wagner 1992, Giddens 1987). Therefore the social world was constructed from this shared subjectivity and the design of research was concerned with how to inquire into the construction of this social reality. Within the interactionist frame it was generally agreed that this construction was formed by social interaction in context, therefore the individual became the central pivot to explain and explore. The philosophical and psychological theories of Cooley, Thomas, Mead, and James drew the attention of the social science disciplines towards how the individual arises from interactions with others. This pragmatic approach perceived an individual as being constituted through interaction with others, illustrated by the descriptive terms of “the looking glass self” and “the social self”. The aim of the various ethnographic styles of research participation was therefore to show how, where and why these interactions occurred (Silverman 1985, Hammersley 1989, Denzin 1989). This also gave the presentation of who was involved in the interaction. The content of the research story became concerned with how we all lived and the research environment changed from the strange or different to the ordinary, as illustrated by the “Presentation of Self in everyday life” by Goffman (1969) and “Understanding everyday Life” by Jack Douglas (1970).

The ethnographic story originally sought to demonstrate the understandable features of the strange: the interactionist ethnography and ethnomethodology sought

to show the complexity of the familiar. Research stories flourished within this frame: the ethnographer's participant observation, the case study method of the social worker, and the content analysis of the humanistic disciplines, evolved to form a naturalistic approach to data collecting (Hammersley 1989, Silverman 1985). Until today, where it is suggested by Antony Giddens that all social research has an "*ethnographic moment*" (1987 p.66.). Ethnography is now this naturalistic inquiry that involves being inside the social practices explored.

From this historical account of ethnography I have developed the methods that would include myself as a participant in the groups, combined with interviews from the others involved with these groups, and the gathering of information about these groups and other groups relating to this area. Another perspective of research methodology in the qualitative field made me aware that this appearance of collecting data "naturally" was not a simple matter. I was part of the interaction that occurred in all these areas. As C. Wright Mills said many years ago:

"The social scientist is not some autonomous being standing outside of society. No-one is outside of society, the question is where he stands within it" (1959:204).

I am therefore recognised as part of the world I wish to explain. Feminism has always prioritised the fact that all researchers:

"...remain human beings with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings and moods and all of these influence how we feel and understand what is going on. Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or techniques of doing research other than through the researcher". (Stanley & Wise 1983:157)

The relationship between the researcher and the researched is a particular focus that highlights the way that research knowledge is produced. Ethnography is a social relationship and this relationship is acknowledged through the term reflexivity. During this stage of going there I became aware of two important aspects of this reflexivity: the practice of reflexivity in the field that remains aware of the relationship between myself and the researched, and the deconstruction of the text that shows how in previous ethnographic descriptions the researcher was made invisible, removed from the interaction that she/he sought to explain. It is these two areas that informed my aim to create an auto/biographical ethnography.

Reflexivity in research.

Reflexivity is a well used concept, but in many ways it is a difficult concept to define. There is a contrast between the self-reflection discussed by Habermas and the reflexive use of context in linguistics shown in Garfinkel's work. I define reflexivity as the examination or analysis of any explanation or description, this examination is the endeavour to recognise how the explanation or description is informed. In this way it is the process of deconstruction and the act of self awareness. Or as Woolgar suggests, it is simply a willingness to go beyond the straightforward interpretation (1988). I am aware of the importance that present day sociology places upon such an understanding of reflexivity. Prominent authors such as Giddens (1990) and Bourdieu (1990) call for the production of a reflexive sociology. This form of reflexivity is perceived as the examination of modern social life through the constant information received about this modern social life, in which sociology plays a major role in providing this constant information. Reflexivity is self knowledge, the way that knowledge is received and incorporated into the individual's way of knowing. Hence, as I stated in Chapter One psychotherapy can be observed as a systematic organisation of this reflexivity. Reflexive, self-knowledge also exists on an institutional level, it is the body of psychotherapeutic knowledge that has organised this systematic reflexivity. Therefore reflexivity becomes a social practice in itself. The practices of the social sciences present an incoming system of knowledge for the individual to examine. In this way reflexivity can be described as the hermeneutic circle or spiral where constant interpretation informs the next possible way of knowing and being, that operates on an individual and institutional level. ²

The proposed practice of reflexivity in social research is a means of examining how the research knowledge is produced. The practice of reflexivity in the field has been the endeavour of feminist research methodology. In bringing forward the experiences of women by women there has been a move to keep these experiences, as near as possible to how the women themselves tell of these experiences. The feminist attention in social research brought forward the hidden

stories of women while at the same time attempting to look at the power relationships that have kept such stories invisible. This recognition led to the feminist ideal of trying to produce social science knowledge that was in keeping with the original stories of the women. Hence the aim of feminist research has been to develop an awareness of how knowledge is produced. An important part of this is recognising the relationship between the participant and the researcher. This awareness seeks to prioritise the subjective and recognise the emotional content as a valuable part of the interaction that occurs in the research field. Stanley & Wise (1983, 1990) propose different strategies for a feminist methodology. Their advice is to challenge the research relationship, to acknowledge the emotional content of this relationship and to keep the researcher in the picture. The challenge to the research relationship has also been taken up by postmodernism. Patti Lather argues that the challenge of postmodernism is to bring together contradictions that have, for instance, created such dualities as the subjective/objective division. In order to bring together such contradictions she suggests that research designs should be *"interactive, contextualised and humanly compelling, because they invite joint participation in the exploration of research issues"* (1991:52). Lather goes on to describe self-reflection as a means of breaking methodological silence. A postmodern ethnography is described as participatory with various realities emerging from this participation (Tyler 1986). Therefore I was able to gather support that a reflexive research relationship could cross the boundaries of "them and us" and provide a new way of describing the context. There would be a meeting point, and this meeting point would enable the subjective to remain a priority. The technique of keeping the research relationship visible was the process of reflexivity and I hoped that this could be achieved by an auto/biographical perspective.

Auto/biography and social research.

I have always understood autobiography to mean the telling of your own life story and biography the telling of someone else's life story. During my search of

² This discussion of reflexivity comes from many sources, Reflexivity and research, Hammersley 1992, Stanley & Wise 1983, Stanley 1992, Woolgar 1988. Reflexivity and social theory, Giddens 1992, 1991, Fox 1993, Seidman & Wagner 1992.

methodological literature I became aware of the hyphenated connection that sociologists were beginning to make. As I have discussed in the progression of ethnography, social research has always depended upon telling the story of another. This telling is the data for all the various forms of naturalistic inquiry, oral histories and life histories, and has given all forms of social research an explanation and understanding of social life. In ethnomethodology the term “accounts” describe how an individual told about her experiences. “Discourse” became another familiar description as a way of talking about a particular way of knowing and seeing social life (Heritage 1984). An important development in social research has been the attention towards “narrative”. Latterly, the use of narrative appears to be receiving more attention than the terms of accounts and discourse. Narrative in social research is argued to show a direct link between how an individual tells about themselves, how they make sense of their world, and how this constructs a sense of self-identity. This is seen in the research into chronic illness and divorce, where the experience of a traumatic life event is understood by the way that the person tells about these experiences (Robinson 1990, Barham 1984, Reissman 1989). By looking at the way people develop different narratives in order to evaluate and share problematic life events such as illness and divorce, this reconstruction has been shown to illustrate a changing experience of self-identity. This changing experience of self is argued to be important as it can indicate how the individual is coming to terms with such life changes. Describing self-identity in this way is also called narrative identity. This is where, as discussed in Chapter One, the association with telling stories about yourself is connected with the reflexive construction of self identity. If I tell about my divorce I begin to reconstruct a story that also begins to inform me about myself. I am the character in the telling, therefore the story folds back upon myself to share this understanding with others and myself at the same time. There are now many areas of support to show how the telling of life stories constitutes the narrator’s identity.³

³ See the collection of works in the *Narrative Study of Lives*, Editors Ruthellen Josselson, Amia Lieblich, 1993. Consuelo Corradi 1991. Margaret Somers 1994. The special edition of *Current Sociology* “Biographical Sociology”, Vol. 43 No. 2/3 1995. As well as the previous references mentioned in this chapter in the discussion of narrative and life events.

As presented in Chapter One, I place this ontology of narrative in the broader frame of stories, in agreement with Ken Plummer (1995), as I found the recognition of stories as a specific selection and organisation of narratives illustrated the social context. My methodological design moved away from using narrative, because I wanted to look at how episodes of narrative can be assembled and selected into a specific story. I wanted to look at the broader area to consider the social context of story telling. Therefore the collection of data within this perspective involved listening, observing and participating within the stories of the group members that all shared the cohesive objective of self-discovery. The telling of this self/discovery story can also be described as telling your autobiography as:

"the autobiographical perspective has to do with taking oneself up and bringing oneself to language" (Gunn cited in Benstock 1988: 11).

When I invite others to engage in telling about their life in the interview setting, to take up the autobiographical perspective, I do so to be able to listen to how they bring themselves into the story while at the same time keeping the social context of this telling. I combine this invitation for others to tell their story with my aim to maintain the process of reflexivity. A central part of this reflexivity is achieved by presenting a selection of my life stories relevant to this research. Alongside the stories of others, these life stories cross the boundaries between the research world, my everyday world and my academic world. I hope that this fluid boundary between the many stories of myself will enable me to acknowledge the research relationship and remain aware of how I produce the knowledge gathered. This therefore becomes the hyphenated connection between the auto/biography.

It is primarily through the work of Liz Stanley that the term auto/biography with a hyphenated connection has become used by sociologists as a way of inquiry into this bringing oneself to language. As Liz Stanley states,

"I would characterise an autobiography as a narrative, not necessarily temporal in structure, which portrays 'the life' of the subject through an account both of external events and the emotional and relational dynamics that go with them" (1993p:96).

Hence Liz Stanley defines life stories as a specific mix of the emotional, relational and external. Here, telling your story becomes a way that the listener can see how the narrator makes sense of the social practices and actions that she/he engages with. I also propose that the hyphenated distinction between auto/biography implies a

different research relationship. It is where I can keep myself as researcher in the picture and use all the various aspects of life stories that I have just mentioned. The researcher's story lies in parallel with the story of those being researched.

Auto/biography in the field

On a pragmatic level I proposed that this auto/biographical perspective alters the research relationship. It brings together the division of inside/outside previously described in ethnographic participation. By using auto/biography in the research I did not have to remain the "*professional stranger*" (Agar 1980). I saw this description of a professional stranger as a refusal to endorse the social relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants of the research. During this stage of going there I heard from some colleagues and still came across the warnings that told of what happened to the researcher who was not able to operate this detachment of professionalism. The participant observer may "*go native*" (Gold 1969:35-37) or be subjected to the demands of "*over rapport*" (Miller 1969:88). Michael Agar suggests that the researcher must have something else to their personality, a certain autonomy, with a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty to permit a detached involvement. The ethnographer must be able to stand back, dip in and out of peoples lives, if not, the ethnographer faces the dangerous assessment that the story cannot be believed because of this involvement. As Agar comments on the publication of Malinowski's diary "*he sometimes dipped a bit heavily into the involvement side, but balanced the scale with some detachment.*" (1980: 51). Agar concludes that detachment is some sort of safety valve for the ethnographer. This assessment of a detached, responsible, involved, stranger presents many contradictions with the previous recognition that researchers are all human made by Stanley and Wise and C Wright Mills at the beginning of this section. Or in other words, we are all part of the stories that are produced in the research setting. Therefore I found the ideal of auto/biography as a way to challenge this old problem of how you describe the relationship with others in the field, as it would acknowledge the relationships between all those involved in the research.

Auto/biography and the Interview.

Interviews consist of stories from others in an environment constructed for that purpose. Interviews are a familiar method that most social researchers use and are applied in many forms and styles. The organisation of how to collect this information depends upon the criteria used to assess this interaction. The concern to make qualitative data as objective as possible, to remove bias from involvement is also applied to the setting of the interview. The debate concerns how to create a neutral value free arena where the questions asked and words used elicit unbiased answers. The distant professional relationship is also identified between the interviewer and the respondent, where the interviewer remains neutral revealing nothing about themselves, they become the sponge. As with the telling of participation in an ethnographic study, this interview format has been challenged.

One of the most prominent areas of exploring this interview process was from the growing body of feminist research. Firstly this neutrality was observed to be a masculine paradigm that did not acknowledge the interview as a social relationship. Ann Oakely (1981) noted how the interviewer needs to be involved in this relationship in order for information to be exchanged. This is especially vital when the information sought is of a more private personal nature. It is through this relationship that the elements of intimacy, friendship, gender, class, race, power, reveal themselves for sociological analysis. With an auto/biographical emphasis shown in the interview process how the interview is constructed becomes apparent (I discuss this in the next section on being there). The interactionist frame of language construction has also enabled feminism to demonstrate the importance of language differences in the expression of women's understanding. Carol Gilligan's work highlights the essential notion of a "different voice" to suggest that meanings produced may present a different way of understanding. Within this consideration of gender, other distinctions of different meaning constructions are noted from black women, disabled women, working class men and women.⁴ The focus has been for

⁴ The recognition of gender differences different voices and different ways of knowing has been brought forward by the psychological exploration of morality by Carol Gilligan "In a Different Voice" 1982. "Womens' Ways of Knowing" Belenky et al 1986. The collection of works (Hirsch & Kellner 1990) demonstrate differences within gender, class and race.

the story teller to speak in her own voice and for the researcher to respect this different voice.

Interviews give an immediate access into understanding auto/ biography through telling your own story while at the same time recognising that the interview is constructed socially with a specific type of social relationship. Biographical interviews necessitate open, unstructured interviews, where the participant tells and the researcher listens. This type of interviewing I associate as the active, creative interview:

"Creative interviewing, involves the use of many strategies and tactics of interaction, largely based on an understanding of friendly feelings and intimacy, to optimise co-operative, mutual disclosure and a creative search for mutual understanding" (Douglas 1985:25).

"...all interviews are reality constructing meaning making occasions" and this "process of meaning production to be as important for social research as the meaning that is produced" (Holstein & Gubrium 1995:4).

Auto/biography as deconstruction.

The other main influence upon this research design in the stage of going there was the recognition of how information gathered in context is used in the stage of analysis. Qualitative research has been deconstructed to show how the process of reflexivity places the invisible researcher back into the text. Firstly, this is achieved by acknowledging the research relationship, as shown by Woolgar's reflection upon Malinowski's diaries (1988) and publications such as "Autobiography and Anthropology" (Okely & Callaway 1992). In both these works the hidden research relationship is told in retrospect. The other implication of reflexivity upon the ethnographic text shows how the theoretical structures and textual style underpin the type of ethnographic description that is presented. This enables another layer of interpretation to exist, where the process of how the final story has been constructed is shown through the way that the text has been assembled and selected. Throughout the history of ethnography there has been a constant debate concerning the criteria used to assess this method (Hammersley 1992). One of the main areas that has influenced the social science deconstruction of explanations is from the philosophy of science. It appears that even within this scientific identification of objectivity the

production of this knowledge is open to interpretation (Manicas 1988, Brown et al 1981). The criterion of objectivity in the social sciences has many different interpretations and forms of measurement and has been applied to demonstrate the reliability and validity of social research (Cain & Finch 1981). One measure of objectivity in ethnography was seen as the researcher's ability to move from the inside world of research where the data is collected, to the outside world of academia (McCall & Simmons 1969). However recent discussions of this notion of objectivity shows how this involves a standard of conformity rather than a criterion for measurement (Smith 1989). The production of knowledge is questioned to show how the stage of analysis presents a changed description of the experiences initially encountered in the research world as the researcher applies a theoretical input to formulate any explanations made.

Ethnography as a text.

Ethnography has a distinct textual style. The textual style is another strategy that the story can use to confirm to its audience the seriousness of the description (Atkinson 1990). It is the deconstruction of this text that reveals that the assembly of the text is governed by the theoretical structures of ethnography. This is discussed in great detail by Hammersley (1992), who develops four distinct categories of ethnographic description to show how they are informed by different theoretical concepts. It is this information that governs the particular assembly of parts. Hammersley firstly identifies an "insightful description" where links are made to show new meanings. He secondly shows ethnography as a "description of a specific microcosm" where issues are explored in depth and then discussed in relation to wider issues. The third category defines "analytical description" where triangulation is used as a method of reliability. The final category shows how the theoretical input of critical cases is used to develop a "grounded theory". Yet all of the categories depend upon the descriptive ability of ethnography. Hence the importance of showing how ethnographic descriptions are informed and constructed, shows how such descriptions are made in the understanding of an objective frame associated with the discipline of sociology. The descriptive categories that Hammersley identifies are ways of moving from the inside description to the social science demands of retelling this story. Through this deconstruction, the techniques

of analysis and textual style used enable the researcher to transform the research world of ethnography to the academic world of social science. There are now many types of analytical techniques devised for qualitative data. I will return to this in the last part of this chapter where I discuss being here. During this stage, going there, the recognition of the production of knowledge gave me new information of how I might challenge the established data collecting techniques while being there. This stage of going there also informed me about the possibility of recognising this production of knowledge while here, a reflexive awareness of how I produce my story.

This deconstruction of the text reveals that clearly that I am the narrator.

I recognise that I am the person telling this story and that my interpretation is at the end of the day what I am left with. It is this recognition of the narrator that is attended to by the emphasis of an auto/biographical ethnography. The sociological awareness that the researcher is also part of the story being told has been recognised from both within the field and during the writing up. As a new researcher I can therefore gain a strength from this academic support, it permits me to keep hold of the subjective by placing myself within the ethnographic story. The telling of experiences, whether they are purely from my own actions or from listening to the experiences of others, does not make something objective. The experience of the description moves from the inside world of participant, to the outside world of analysis. Therefore ethnography is the description of experiences and the experience of description, that are placed in a new frame and different social practice. This frame and social practice necessitates a reconstruction of how the experiences are described and assembled. Hence, my attention is brought to who tells the story and how this story is told. For example, the Diaries of Malinowski have brought forward the values of the author that present a new interpretation of his classical ethnographic tales. The diary has shed a different light upon how the story has been written and shows how the parts were assembled, which leaves this assembly open to various interpretations. This does not necessarily present the explanations as any less serious, as Latour states, it simply enables us to understand how the pieces get assembled to identify the power and politics of how explanations are informed (Latour 1988). It is the assembly of experiences that I make during the analysis that

reconstructs these experiences into a sociological story. Hence the story teller's values that may be identified in this assembly can be placed in an equally valuable frame of reference for sociological inquiry.

Auto/biographical ethnography defined.

At the end of this stage of going there I had a clear understanding of how I could operate this methodology. I proposed that auto/biography would counteract the dilemmas of attachment and detachment, of movement from one world to another, of producing a sociological story, through the layers of story telling that I would be able to place in this auto/biographical story telling. The layers would be:

- The biographical stories from others that would enable me to look at what self-discovery means to those who lead and participate in the groups.
- The auto/biographical field notes that would enable me to tell what happened to both myself and others in the groups.
- The story of myself as researcher both within and without the groups, so that my experiences in this role of research were acknowledged as part of the research process. The auto/biographical story of constructing social research.

Therefore auto/biography is the application of reflexivity at all levels of story telling. I proposed that auto/biography at the stage of analysis would keep my assembly, selection and construction of the research story visible. This is made possible by locating this research design in the sociology of stories. I would be able to go beyond the substantive issue and look at how research is constructed. Here a mirroring occurs. On the one hand, the substantive issue, the learning, sharing and telling of the self-discovery stories, which reconstruct self-identity stories. On the other hand, the research process, the focus through which these stories become transformed into a piece of research. I have the recognition of myself as the story teller who is both in the story and encourages the story telling. It is a particular feature of this research that central to the substantive area of telling therapy stories is the genre of autobiography. The participants are invited to bring themselves forward into language. Here the ontology of story telling connects the individual with

social life, where story telling is a sharing of experiences, and this sharing enables a sense of self to be made explicit. This is interrelated with the epistemology of this research story, where the awareness of myself as researcher constructs the story on many levels. I am invited to bring myself into language through my social research.

Going there: another story.

I set out to explore an aspect of social life that I had experienced and become interested in myself. I had just moved back into Oxford and in order to connect myself with new interests and new friends I looked at an alternative directory of events. I was interested in this area of alternative health as I wanted to feel better about myself. I choose to go to a Shiatsu (Japanese massage) group as I decided I needed to look after myself more. I had also been attending counselling sessions. I describe this counselling as formal, as although the counsellor works in the private market she was recommended to me by a local psychotherapy network, not the alternative directory. This psychotherapy network prioritised the formal recognition of counselling credentials. This experience sensitised my awareness of the many different approaches to counselling that are presented in the alternative directory. In my past I have worked in psychiatry, so I am very attuned to issues of mental health. I know that it was not my mental health that I was worried about in this psychiatric sense, luckily I had not experienced any extreme disturbance of who I think I am and how others see me, but I did feel generally unhappy, lonely, uncertain of my future, wondering how to make friends. I heard from friends about their involvement in groups of a psychotherapeutic nature. It felt as if these groups would help me and could be of interest to know about on a wider sociological level. Why do people like me turn to such groups? I went to my first self-discovery group that has been organised by a friend. From this experience, I surmised this to be an area that deserves my attention for myself and my sociological interest. It appears that there is a growing shared interest in looking after yourself, sorting yourself out. I had observed this in my shiatsu group and it was reflected in my first attendance at a self-discovery group. It felt that once my ears and eyes are open to this world that it grew ever larger, more complex, and more intriguing. I visited the alternative book shop regularly, I attended various fairs advertised in complementary health and green awareness. I found myself entering a new world, with a vast amount of new information about how I might look after myself and practices that introduced me to many new people. This information and these people became part of my everyday life. It was my reality, I developed a new interest in adopting a new life style. When I decided that this was the area that I could research my introduction to the term auto/biography presented me with an exciting new possibility. I could actually research in a way that I found challenging and conducive to how I saw myself. I wanted to research in a style that would not exploit people or pretend to be anything it was not. I wanted to tell about what was happening to myself and a group of people like myself once we entertained this hope for changing ourselves.

The Social Practice of Being There.

Access

Finding this field of inquiry seemed a fairly straight forward process. It sort of fell into place. I first of all gained contact with four facilitators, who were the leaders of the three groups I participated in. Tony, Hyone, Martha and Claudia are the key facilitators, who gave me direct access into being a member of the groups they facilitated. Through this group membership I was able to develop a relationship with the other participants to negotiate interviews. During this participation in the field groups I came across other contacts that I included for comparison. These areas of comparison highlight different ways of accessing the self-discovery groups and different techniques used in the groups. My research included six interviews with other facilitators, Jill & Peter, Al, Jen, Michael and Patricia, who ran groups I classified as falling into the category of self-discovery. I defined this category of self-discovery as the psychotherapeutic self examination and reflection promised by the groups to know yourself and this knowing would bring about change. The initial contact with all these facilitators illustrates the strength of networking that exists around this area. This networking is an important part of the analysis explored in Chapters Four and Six. Here I am able to show how the "field" fell into place and the centrality of the facilitators in setting a structure to the research outcomes. The main body of my participation is described in Chapter Four where I was involved in the three field work groups for a year. I also attended one weekend workshop facilitated by Jill. My field notes describe the format and practices of these groups, and the difficulties that I have experienced in the field when trying to put this methodological concept of auto/biography into practice. This difficulty is also shown in the creation of auto/biographical interviews with the facilitators and the participants.

Finding the Key Facilitators.

Tony & Hyone. The Facilitators of the Seed Group . I was introduced to the Seed Group by a friend who knew of my personal interest in looking at myself and my developing research question. Here I met Tony and Hyone. They were both in

their 50's, their children from previous marriages were grown up, they lived in a flat above the centre in which they work. Tony has worked in the area of self-discovery for many years. Through a combination of Jungian psychology, understanding dreams, yoga and movement, he devised a way of trying to understand the unconscious called self regulation. The Seed Group is the practice of this self regulation. As well as running the Seed Group, Tony writes books and has developed his dream analysis in the media of radio and teletext. Hyone is Tony's partner who also has worked with him for many years running groups and developing her own individual client work. The Seed Group is held every month in a centre owned and run by the facilitators. The facilitators' centre hosts a number of other similar type of groups and provides the base for Tony and Hyone to develop their work with individual clients. Therefore Tony and Hyone are self-employed in this area of self discovery, although they use other skills when necessary to generate income, such as child care and house maintenance. Tony and Hyone have a similar background to their work developing their interest and work in therapy alongside other areas. They are not trained in an official recognised psychotherapeutic school but their work is accredited by the many years of experience and Tony's reputation as a published author.

The Seed Group is run as a residential weekend workshop, lasting from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. Membership is open, flexible and predominantly through recommendations by friends. This group is open to everyone without prior selection. Payment for the group is by donation. I interviewed seven members of this group who I introduce later on and place in the group in Chapter Five. I attended the seed group in June 1992 when my research proposal was beginning to develop. I next attended the Seed Group in September 1992 when my focus on self-discovery had evolved and I asked if I would be able to include this group in my research proposal. Tony and Hyone agreed. Tony was particularly interested in research and at this time was continuing his research into dreams. I then continued to attend the Seed group in October, November 1992, January, April, May, July and September 1993.

Martha: facilitator of the Re-evaluation Co-counselling Group.

I met Martha at a Complementary Medicine Fair at the local town hall. Martha was running a stall on art therapy. Martha is an artist who has worked in therapy for the last ten years, initially as a participant in her own self-discovery then as a qualified art therapist and counsellor. Martha was 35, a white African, lived in a rented flat in town. Martha is the facilitator of an introductory class to Re-evaluation Co-counselling (RC). RC is an international organisation and Martha is an accredited facilitator of this organisation. The information and structure of the group are set centrally by its founder Harvey Jackins in North America. The group structure and formation of the RC community have formalised rules and regulations governing membership. The objective of this organisation is to bring everyone to a process of counselling in which we are all equally able to be both the counsellor and the counselled. Once the introductory course is completed, the participant is then a member of the RC community and receives contact numbers of counsellors and a local news-letter. Payment to the group is based on a sliding scale. After the introductory course, co-counselling is then based on a reciprocal exchange. The RC local organisation continues to arrange workshops on specific issues open to any member that involves a fee to attend.

The group I attended ran from October to December 1992. This was a closed group that met one night a week for 12 weeks. The course also involved the attendance at a weekend workshop in November, where all introductory classes held in the local area were brought together. During this 12 week period, as required by the co-counselling course, I met with various members of the group once a week for individual co-counselling sessions. Access to the group is through advertisements and recommendations. The group is open to everyone, although the facilitator operates an informal selection procedure at the initial interview. Martha holds the group in her own home. The class I attended had 12 members, six men and six women including the facilitator and two helpers. Helpers are members who have previously completed the fundamental class and are requested by the facilitator to assist with the running of the next class. After the group had finished I interviewed seven members of this group, Nina, Dawn, Dave, Anton, Mary and Wendy. The

seventh member, Al, I transferred into the category of facilitator as his work provided an interesting comparison.

Claudia :Women in Seasonal Evolution.(WISE)

I was given Claudia's name by the woman who led the Shiatsu group I had attended. Claudia is the facilitator of the WISE group, she is a trained practitioner in Chinese Medicine, acupuncture and has been involved in Jungian therapy and transpersonal psychotherapy for many years. Claudia has also completed a course in Steiner Education. Claudia is 42, married with two young children. She lives in her own house with her partner. Her partner is a transpersonal psychotherapist but they do not work together. Through her own interest, she has developed this closed women's support group that uses the rhythms of nature and seasonal celebrations to explore what is happening in women's lives today. Membership is primarily through recommendation and new members sought when old members leave. It is a continuous ongoing group, I joined at the festival time of Michaelmas in October 1992, and continued my attendance throughout this seasonal year, Samhain in November, Rebirth in December, Candlemas in February, Spring Equinox in March, Belthane on Mayday and Midsummer Solstice in June 1993. During the year that I attended there were eight women including Claudia. The group is held at a centre for therapeutic and treatment sessions, owned and run by Claudia and her partner who works in transpersonal psychology. The cost of the group is £12.00 each meeting. I interviewed three members of this group, Margaret, Katja and Celia.

Opportunities for Comparisons: the other Facilitators.

Opportunities arose during my research participation to compare my experience of these groups and facilitators with the work of other facilitators (Al, Jen, Michael & Patricia, Jill & Peter). My contact with these facilitators illustrate the main areas observed in the networking process, informal recommendation, advertisements and friendship that I discuss in Chapters four and six.

Jill: facilitator of “Heal Yourself” Workshop based on the book by Louise Hay.

Jill trained in America with Louise Hay to teach people how to use a particular approach to self-help therapy, published in a book with the same title “Heal Yourself”. Jill holds non residential weekend workshops to enable people to do the exercises in a group setting. She holds the group in her home where she lives with her partner, Peter, who does similar counselling work. Jill is 40 years old. There are set charges for the group. This weekend was £60.00 I only attended the one weekend workshop, I did not interview any members of this group as I felt at this stage of the research my data would be adequate. I was more interested in comparing the way that such a group operated with the others, especially as it had come from a totally independent response through the advertisement. After the “Heal Yourself Workshop”, Jill and her partner, Peter agreed to be interviewed.

Michael & Patricia.

I met Michael and Patricia through my interest in ecological issues. They are partners who led many courses showing a wide variety of techniques to achieve self-discovery and what they described as “healing”. The techniques ranged from using ancient myths and traditions, massage and yoga, to crystals and colours. Michael and Patricia were in their 50s, lived in a self contained flat in an organic farming community. They held the groups in their own home and also worked in other centres.

Chris.

During my participation in the RC group I met Chris who was a facilitator of men’s groups that focused upon self-discovery. I decided to interview him under my category of facilitator rather than participant as I felt this would be an interesting contrast with my participation in WISE a group for women only and my interview with Claudia and her interest in nature and seasons in her work. Chris has developed men’s groups to promote self-discovery through nature and ancient legends. He holds

these groups at various centres in the country. He describes himself as a Reichian therapist. Chris is 45, lives with his partner in a rented house. He has two children by previous marriages.

Finally the last facilitator that I interviewed was

Jen.

Jen was visiting a friend. I asked her to be interviewed as she was a facilitator of self-discovery groups in California. I felt that this would broaden the comparative analysis of facilitator's stories. She worked in an area called Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) that I had seen advertised in this country. Jen called herself a "holistic health practitioner". She works using an eclectic approach to self-discovery, from massage, yoga, huna philosophy and NLP. She lives and works in California, she is 45.

I have now introduced the facilitators who are the main guides into this area of self-discovery. From my contact with the facilitators the network I observed continued to grow involving books, magazines, advertisements, places, contacts, friendships. This process of negotiating access with the facilitators was central to how the research developed. Firstly, with the key facilitators and the groups my role of auto/biographer is questioned. Secondly the use of auto/biographical interviews is explored.

Auto/biography and access.

Firstly I set off to negotiate access with the loosely defined concepts of self, health, and well-being that I would explore through autobiography in this area of alternative health. It was after this initial exploration that the concept of self-discovery arose from the field. My contact with the facilitators was made on an informal basis through friends and chance meetings. As I gained informal access to the key facilitators I tried to formalise this relationship by writing letters using these broad concepts of self, health and well-being, to request participation and seeking a formal agreement of an interview with the facilitators. I only sent these letters to Tony and Hyone, Michael and Pat. I always felt uncomfortable about these letters

and felt that their role was a hindrance in the informality of the research. As the research continued I did not use letters and negotiated through my personal contacts within the groups and over the telephone. Although the concept of self-discovery was yet to be clarified I emphasised my use of auto/biography to challenge the research relationship. This initial contact was primary in producing a shared understanding of autobiographical research that the facilitators were very supportive of. The key facilitators were involved in research projects of their own associated with their work. They saw research as vital for their work to continue and develop. They found my ideals of joint interaction, my story alongside others in this quest for self-discovery, an exciting possibility. This sharing developed a sense of alliance and friendship where my role of researcher was very rarely questioned after this initial contact. This acceptance of my role of researcher reflects many points. Firstly, the issue of networking in this area is very informal and centres around an understanding of recommendation through personal contacts. Secondly my use of the term auto/biography formed an understanding that this was my own story of self-discovery that the facilitators were only too pleased to be able to assist with. An informal agreement occurred between us, as my proposal for an autobiographical study implied that there would be some sort of return for the facilitators. This would provide them with a new research technique that they found interesting to explore in their group work.

This complementary role of being researchers together created a sense of cohesion while negotiating access, but this changed as the access was granted. Claudia suggested that I become a member of her WISE group that met on specific seasonal festivals throughout the year. Claudia said that my membership of the group was perfectly acceptable, even as a researcher due to the research being autobiographical, but felt that an introductory letter to the other group members would be polite. Martha suggested that I became a member of her fundamental co-counselling class that met one evening a week for 12 weeks. Martha was happy that my membership to the group was through my autobiography, but I should send a letter of introduction to the other members explaining my intentions. Another friend introduced me to the Seed Group. I originally attended this group out of personal interest before my research aims were clarified. Hence, after attending two weekend

workshops over a period of three months, I approached the facilitator to request that this group became part of my research. Tony, the facilitator, knew of my research through informal conversation and was very happy for this to occur. Tony was very interested in research and had himself published many books. He was looking forward to collaborating with me.

My access to the three groups, WISE, Co-counselling and Seed, was confirmed by the use of the term autobiography because the facilitators supported this approach. However, when I took this approach in the groups I felt I was in collusion with the leaders of the group, to have some hidden purpose, despite my objective to keep the research relationship visible at all times. This feeling of hiding arose from the experience of the introductory letter. During my initial meeting with Claudia and Martha we decided that an introductory letter sent to the participants would be the best way to negotiate their involvement. Claudia changed her mind and said that my introduction to the other group members was not necessary as I was attending the group in my own right. The word autobiography implied I could tell my own story. I sent off the letters of introduction to Martha, for her to send to the members of the co-counselling class. I found at our first meeting, the letter had just been handed out and the group members were reading it when I arrived. Again it was understood that I would be telling my own story. Therefore my participation within the groups was seen as not involving the others. It was presumed that this would only occur when the interview took place outside of the group. The Seed group presented a different problem. As I was already a member of the group the idea of an introductory letter was not addressed. The informality of my research involvement in the group reflected the ease and openness of the group. There was not a selection procedure to question why a person should attend. I discussed it with other group members who also agreed that the group could be included in my research project and were very supportive, but as this was an open group with a flexible attendance many members of the group did not become aware of my research role.

This dilemma of having gained access to the groups through the facilitators by the use of an autobiographical description of my research role became more complex as my relationship within the groups progressed. One of the first reflective comments in my field notes was whether I was really able to be as honest as I

thought. I felt I had entered a disguise in collusion with Claudia and Martha and had chosen to keep quiet in the seed group with Tony. My friendship with the facilitators of these groups seemed essential in my access into the groups. My use of the term autobiography also created the element of trust and the idea that we were in a partnership in generating some sort of understanding about the groups. I was able to ignore this contradiction of "my own story". I did not clearly explicate that, as research, it would still be my story of others. I suggest this occurred because of the blurred boundary between my story and the story of others that the term auto/biography can hide. The hyphenated connection of auto/biography, where the stories of others is more explicit only appears in the academic world of writing up not in the participation in the field. There was an unease during "being there" that I was abusing an understanding of trust that is central to this area.

The notion of trust is a clear factor of recommendation observed in the process of the alternative network that I highlight in Chapters Four and Six. This was shown when I went to another weekend workshop where I did not negotiate access through the description of autobiographical research. Later on in the field work year, July 93, I attended a Louise Hay workshop facilitated by Jill. This takes place as a weekend workshop and is open to both sexes. I responded to an advertisement and my motivation arose primarily for another group to compare with the groups I was already involved in (as I discussed earlier). I rang at the last minute and asked to attend without stating any research involvement. During the introductory round I stated my research proposal. Two things were apparent at this time. As my research was on-going I was able to mention the other groups and facilitators. Jill had worked with Tony at an alternative residential centre that hosted many groups. Jill also knew of Claudia and Martha by reputation, so I was accorded a sort of passport. The other was that my use of the term autobiography within the group was understood as me writing a book about my own self-discovery.

Auto/biography and participation in the groups.

Once I had entered the groups, questions of how was I forming my autobiography did not occur to me and I was not asked by anyone else. I just started keeping field notes. Perhaps field notes is a misleading description; my autobiographical participation was written as a journal, it was my story of what

occurred and how I felt. This included my experiences, but could not be separated from what was happening to others as this was more important for my research role. In my journal, I questioned how I was using this notion of autobiography. I had stated that although I was telling my own story I would be asking for interviews to bring the other group members into the story. A clear demarcation arose in the journal between my own responses to the self-discovery techniques used in the groups and a description of how these techniques operated in the group as a whole. It set a precedent for my research role of autobiography to automatically become the story of others.

It was this demarcation that gave rise to the feeling of disguise. Autobiography implied to the facilitators that I told my story of my self-discovery in the groups, but I did not clarify that this would be my story of self-discovery of the group. This led me to ask myself if I really thought I was trying to achieve a multi-voiced, jointly interactive research design through the application of auto/biography. At this stage of being there, I firmly believed that I was, despite this feeling of disguise that already was beginning to recognise a difference between the levels of story I told in the journal. I still felt that I could overcome this misunderstanding in my communication regarding the use of autobiography as I would endeavour to place all the stories side by side. The story of how I constructed the research aimed to challenge this hidden aspect of social research. While at the same time allowing the stories of the others to be told from themselves to challenge the need for research criteria to retell subjective meanings, and to counteract the power relationship of the research process. While I was a member of these groups I certainly felt that I was achieving these aims.

At the same time another aspect of my developing participation was of everything fitting into place. I had three groups that I could participate in, interviews of other facilitators and participants of the groups were promised. From the initial exploration of the groups I clarified and identified the concept of self-discovery, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Three. This provided me with the theoretical format that I could then use to link the practices of the groups, the stories that were told to me in the interview setting and the prerequisites of forming a theoretical debate in sociology. I could formulate my research design in a satisfactory manner to

present my research to the academic committee. In other words my use of the term auto/biography worked well. The methodological techniques I proposed through the use of auto/biography enabled me to clearly explore the substantive issue of self-discovery. By listening, participating and reflecting upon how, why and where these self-discovery stories were told, I could bring forward all the many layers of research that I wanted to acknowledge.

Through the discipline of keeping my journal that documented my participation in the groups, I became aware of what this practice of reflexivity may mean. I had gone with an idea of its definition that I noted in the “going there” stage. Its practice brought forward distinct constituents. Firstly there was reflection. This occurred in the journal as another interpretation of my description of what went on. These included reflections of a very personal, emotional nature, how I felt. Secondly there was the element of reflexivity upon the construction of research. This constantly brought forward the research purpose of keeping such a journal. The autobiographical story was not to record my experiences of self-discovery for my own benefit, but for the purpose of sociological research. It was the auto/biographical description of others in the groups, where the hyphenated connection with myself as narrator of others becomes prominent. Therefore the interpretation I selected was with this objective in mind.

Reflexivity in research demands the dynamic interplay between personal reflection and sociological examination of how I use the knowledge I have. In this way the reflexive process could bring everything into abeyance as the questions of relativity and solipsism are applied. However this abeyance does not stop the story, it provides the story with several layers. The ethnographic story told in my journal shows how I move constantly from an insider participant understanding, on my own journey of self-discovery, to the social scientist that writes about this as the journey of others. This movement is constantly made visible through the process of reflexivity. I am constantly aware of how I have retold my story of participation beyond the just “being there”. My role of researcher is always present in the journal, but it frequently disappeared in my participation. Therefore my reflexivity is the construction and examination of knowledge at this time. This integrated interplay of the three R’s, reflection, reflexivity and relativity, presents a very different style of

keeping a journal. It is the combination of field notes and diary. It is here that the framing and social practice of qualitative research in sociology becomes my “local frames of reference” (Alexander 1992) or “situated knowledge” (Smith 1989). Through my use of auto/biography I am able to see my story through different webs of connections: in the groups the centre of the web becomes myself, in the journal the centre of the web is the sociological researcher. The recognition of other layers in telling any story introduces the possibility of what Smart refers to as the “*ethical (re)turn*” (1993:77). It showed my story of how I was part of constructing this research world while also being part of this world.

Auto/biography in the Interview.

During the stage of “going there” I had gained academic support to try and develop open, unstructured interviews where the story from the other person could freely evolve while at the same time recognise my role in this telling. The creative, active interview appeared to fit these objectives. (Douglas 1985, Holstein & Gubrium 1995). The main characteristic that arose from this type of interviewing was my role of listener. The listening role was set by the first interviews with the facilitators. My attempt to provide a more formal written request, with Tony and Hyone, Michael and Pat, stating the introductory ideas of self, well-being and health set the frame of the story told. It also gave the facilitators a time to prepare their response. The initial four interviews with Tony and Hyone (the facilitators of the seed group) and Michael and Patricia, were selected as I knew both couples previously. I felt I had a positive relationship with them and that they were very interested in my research. As Jack Douglas states (1985), it is best to start with friends and then move out. Due to the distance travelled (one couple lived in the South West of England and the other in the East Anglia Region) the interviews involved me staying overnight in their homes. During this stay the interviews became the pivot of our daily life. Times for meals or walks were negotiated around telling the stories that seemed to fill the days. When the transcribed time of four hours for Tony and Hyone and three hours for Michael and Patricia, who told their stories separately, is noted, this does not seem to represent the days when this interview

occurred. We had created our own world, a secluded space away from other demands, it felt as if we had created a story time.

The resulting story was the story of their own self-discovery and their hope for others to discover their own self-discovery path. These first four interviews presented me with a format where the facilitator easily filled the story time with very little need for my involvement other than listener and reflector. These first four facilitators were well versed story tellers, especially Tony, who was used to telling his story in books and in other media. From this it was interesting to observe how the interviews from the other facilitators at various stages of the research also followed this format. I was surprised at how freely other stories flowed. I found my role to coax a response from the respondent very minimal. Colleagues who have looked at the transcripts express their surprise at my infrequent interventions. It developed that my part in this active, creative interview was to listen and maintain a very minimal frame to the story. The facilitators were all very eager to tell their story.

The important strategy in creating this role of listener was negotiating the initial question together. I suggest it was this initial negotiation with the facilitator to set the starting point to their story, which altered the position of myself as an interviewer to a listener. I concluded that this gave the freedom for the narrator to follow their own story. To demonstrate this I will describe the different opening questions negotiated at the beginning of the interviews. This reveals how each respondent chose to set off on their story in many different ways.

For example: Interview date: 11.12.92. Tony and Hyone had received my letter. We then spent several minutes deciding what the opening question would be. Tony decided he would like to be asked about the self. Therefore my opening question was as follows:

Max: "I'm going to start off the discussion by introducing the general term of "the self" and ask what we mean, whether there is such a thing as this self?"

Tony: "Are you talking about our sense: of self, our ego, or are you talking about this mystical term like Jung does with a Capital S the Self. I feel that if I look at myself carefully or look at what I see as my sense of self I see that I am an interface between two very big opposites, a very down to earth opposite, every day opposite....."

Tony then went on to continue defining this Self for three minutes without interruption. This followed throughout his story and Tony used various episodes to keep defining the self.

Interview date 16 12. 1992. Patricia had written down some of her ideas in response to my letter. She decided to start the interview off from her written comments. She had chosen to start by telling me about the self.

Patricia: when I first started thinking about self and the question, I thought I must go back to childhood..... The interview then followed the format of telling about how she had discovered this self.

In comparison the following interviews with facilitators who had not received a written formal request exhibited a similar starting off point as I continued to use this initial negotiation.

Interview, May 1993. Claudia also decided to set off the story herself and actually held the microphone as if talking to an audience:

Claudia: What made me look at myself? Well first of all I think before I had any jargon for it

Claudia then proceeded to talk continuously with no coaxing from me, she went and organised her story telling by different episodes of her life interspersed with reading from books.

Claudia: Wait a minute you must read this Maxine, it will show you something I am sure (starts reading)

Interview, December 1993 After talking about the research, introducing the idea of self-discovery and well-being, Jen and I decided to start with a focus upon the development of her work.

Maxine; I would like to ask how you came to be working in the area you are working in now?

Jen then proceeded to talk about how her work had developed from her initial exploration into diet and her training in NLP.

This aspect of negotiating the opening question highlights some interesting points. Firstly by using the words knowing yourself in the introductory letter and in my informal discussions I set a clear frame for “the self” emerge. From the setting of the frame my role then became very inactive. I had asked all the facilitators to talk

about an area that was very important in their lives. They had all come to the conclusion that self-discovery was an essential part of living for themselves and to teach others. I had asked them to talk about something central to their own sense of who they are and their main purpose in life. In many ways I was like a new recruit entering into a particular school of philosophy asking to be told about the meaning of life.

The flowing story that commenced from this initial question revealed a very competent ability in story telling. Although I could not identify any differences in their competency of filling the interview space, there was an acknowledgement within the interview that some of the facilitators were more practised in this art than others. I found that both the male members of the facilitator partnerships, Tony and Michael, were well versed in the art of public speaking and I had asked them to speak about an issue central to their heart and sense of purpose. They had both developed their work along their experiences that they described as this path of self-discovery. In other words, they wanted to tell their story and tell it they did with a vengeance. In contrast, the ability to tell their story shown by Patricia and Hyone appeared quieter. Obviously gender difference in the factors of this presentation may be due to numerous factors, but as other female facilitators revealed a strong competency in story telling, I feel that the assessment of being a quieter story for Hyone and Patricia is because it took place alongside the very vocal abilities of Tony and Michael. The other interview with a facilitator partnership, Jill and Peter, demonstrated a more equal ability to tell and command the attention of the listener. I had worked with Jill for the weekend workshop "Heal Yourself", but I had not met her partner, Peter, before. Again Peter was able to tell about his story of self with an easy flow and competency of story telling and Jill also reflected this style. I concluded that the experience of publicly telling about their own self-discovery is a vital part of their work. The style of the interview also confirmed this importance and developed this ability. The experience of public story telling is illustrated by Jen, who stated during the interview:

"I did an interview for a psychologist a few months ago who asked what had Neuro-linguistic-Programming done for me? It has given me the ability to be my own director, the producer and actress of my own life movie."

Claudia, Chris and Martha were not so experienced in the public telling of their story outside of their work. Hence their interviews show how they build upon this experience to prepare the story for a different telling. Claudia remarked that the interview had given her a sense of telling her story, *"how fascinating it is to talk like this"*. The production of the story for the interview created a chance to consolidate their ways of understanding. This is illustrated in Martha's story.

"There are a lot of things about fear, defence, division and boundaries, that keep us separate from ourselves and from each other and from nature. I never talk like this, this is amazing to explore this. At the same time I am not an essentialist. I guess I don't know....."

As identified in the stage of going there, I hoped to challenge the power dimension of the interviewer and interviewee relationship. The power relationship is a well documented area that the application of notions of friendship, intimacy and reciprocity has tried to overcome (Oakley 1981, Devault 1990). The features of power in the interview relationships were complex. Being in their homes, especially when I was staying overnight, made me into their guest with a privilege access into their personal private lives. I was listening to the stories of people who are older and considered experts in the area I was inquiring into. This created an environment where they were the expert and I was the listener, a distinct novice who had gone to learn about their experiences. When discussing earlier how I negotiated access into the groups, I highlighted the importance of friendship, intimacy, and trust in my relationship with the facilitators. The interview relationship continued this reflection. The distinct feeling was that I had managed to create an open, unstructured, flexible interview, where I could still remain visible. I went to listen to their stories and although I framed the story, the process of telling unfolded a distinct style that all the facilitators demonstrated. It is this style that forms the major focus of the analysis. There was a very clear, sometimes practised story to tell to someone who asks to listen.

Interviewing the Participants.

I had interviewed the key facilitators and my first comparative partnership, Michael and Patricia, before I arranged any interviews with the participants of the groups. Chapter Four presents the members of the groups and their connections. Not all the participants from the groups were interviewed. Those who were willing to be interviewed are self selecting. The interviewees are introduced in detail in Chapter Five. Here I wish to raise some similarities and differences in the interview styles that were observed between the facilitators and the participants of the groups.

With the participants I used the same strategy of negotiating the opening question. I hoped that this would continue the means of creating a shared environment, a shared communication and actively counteract the role of a neutral interviewer. The active, creative interview confirmed my endeavour to create a shared environment with my fellow participants. The important point here is that I was already a member of this shared environment through my participation in the groups. I found myself frequently using the pronoun “we” when coaxing the story, which I had not done so obviously before. This “we” had been used by the facilitators and participants when expressing how everyone has a chance to understand things differently. In the analysis I describe this use of “we” as the expressed hope for social change through the process of self-discovery. It becomes a moral foundation where “we” constructs self-discovery as a personal benefit and a way forward for society in the future. In the interview setting with the participants this use of “we” also provided another function. It constructed a very different sense of story telling than experienced with the facilitators. In the facilitator interviews it gave the experience of being taught a new belief. With the participants, I was already part of this world, where belief and belonging to the idea of self-discovery had been engaged. I had a different relationship, more equal, with all of us being participants of the groups. This describes my freedom to use “we” to confirm our shared experiences. Despite this sharing of group membership my research role of interviewer re-emerged more clearly. I gave the participants the same freedom in selecting where to be interviewed, in their own homes, my home, at work, with another person or on their own and how to start the interview. As with the facilitators the opening question was negotiated and most participants wanted to start with their

involvement in the group they had just been attending. While the facilitators presented their story as the person with more knowledge to share concerning the inquiry into self-discovery, the participants saw me as the person with more knowledge to share and frequently asked what I had found out, *"Do others say the same?"* *"How many people have you interviewed?"* *"You must know"*. Hence this change in the assessment of knowledge altered the relationship. I was now the expert as I had interviewed others and had attended many groups. This was my area of expertise where the participant was the novice.

The participants were still competent story tellers and this competency was expressed by creating a major theme to the story. This dominant theme was an area in their lives that they knew more about, for example, Clio told more about her art, Mary told more about her politics and Nina told more about her work. Occasionally when the participant was also an experienced group member or also worked in similar areas, the major theme became very similar to that of the facilitators, how they had discovered them selves. The competency of telling a story demonstrated that all participants were verbal people due to their educational backgrounds and experiences, plus the fact that they had chosen a verbal form of knowing themselves by their attendance in a therapy group. Even if this verbal form of telling about themselves prior to the group was unclear, the techniques of the groups had encouraged this ability. The only story that differs greatly in its presentation of being able to tell a story, is a member of the Seed Group, Debbie, who found any verbal interaction difficult. She had difficulty in finding her voice and that was why she had sought to go to the group. Debbie was reluctant to speak and the interview, or conversation, took place during a break from the group, as would any other conversation. I suggest that on the whole those who agreed to my request to be interviewed selected those who are competent tellers. Like the facilitators, the participants found an ease in talking about themselves. Obviously this had been encouraged and practised in the groups, although like the facilitators they were all educated people with a strong ability in articulation.

To conclude this interview section of "being there", my role in the interview setting felt much clearer than when participating in the groups. My research role was more overt, I was collecting their stories in a supportive, shared

environment. The interview was inviting others to bring themselves forward into language, with the clear invitation to tell their story to myself as researcher not as a fellow group member. Hence the role of auto/biography felt clear. I was collecting their life stories that I had framed. During the interview, although my listening role could be described as inactive, this is only one perspective of listening. Listening actively enables the story to be told by the other. A story could not exist without someone to listen to it. Research is listening to others and I created that role of listening. To conclude this stage of "being there" is where the hyphenated connection of the auto and the biography constantly shifts to present differing emphases. Nevertheless, despite these different emphases, I felt very visible and a part of this interaction through this hyphenated connection. When these stories were taken away, transcribed and became my means of data for analysis many other problems of auto/biography were identified.

Being there: another story.

My enthusiasm to develop an autobiographical style of research in the endeavour to counteract the research boundaries was met by some colleagues with regular notes of caution. Research should be research, serious and proven, "How will you know if these groups work?". "How will you measure that people know themselves more?". There was obviously an assessment going on from certain more experienced male sociologists concerning my ability to be sociological. At this particular stage of my life my entry into these self-discovery groups was indeed all part of my search for who am I and what do I want from life. As with many women friends that had reached the thirty something, divorced, single parent, life stage, I was trying to develop a new career, meet new friends and possibly have a relationship. I turned to this alternative network of social contacts. During this time of being there, my constant movement from the groups to the university felt that I was giving a confusing story. I appeared to be telling my university colleagues that I was in fact discovering myself so fast that I was changing in front of their eyes. This image of an over involved researcher who was going into therapy groups did not account for the fact that I have always been interested in this sort of practice. My background in the mental health field as an occupational therapist was not known. When I started at the university I came from a job in a physical hospital, I believed this to be a central factor in the image assessment applied to me. I appeared to be telling a story on another level through my physical presentation. I had just had my hair cut and for some reason this short hair was perceived as more conventional and vice versa, when I was at the hospital with long hair I was considered slightly unconventional. I note this in particular because as my hair has grown once again, and I am now in the stage of being here, people I meet from Oxford Brookes frequently note how much I have changed. This change is attributed to my involvement in the groups. It

appears that my hair style was telling a story of changes in my self identity. Judgement was being expressed about who I was and what I was doing. It is this complex social relationship between myself and others not only in the world of alternative health but in the world of the university that forms this research. The best way I have chosen to show this relationship to a sociological audience is through the methodology of auto/biographical ethnography in the frame of telling stories. It is my way of bringing the parts of my life together and challenging the way that research would separate them.

Being Here.

My journal had already highlighted the feelings of conflict, the first dilemma of participation in the field groups where I was a group member with an ulterior motive. In contrast the interviews were more clearly identifiable as a research strategy. These problems within the research world pale into insignificance when the stage of "being here" is entered. The term auto/biography immediately questions which is my story and the selection of stories from others as all the stories become placed into a new frame and social practice. Here the transformation of the story into a sociological identity takes place.

The first anxieties of this sociological identity revolve around questions of content. Firstly, I thought that auto/biography would keep the research as a whole by altering the research relationship between myself and the other. I would not have to attend to the warnings of over rapport or going native as my relationship is the research process. For many years social research has been afraid of acknowledging this connection. Instead we have developed many words to maintain a sense of difference. In anthropological ethnographic stories 'the other' has been described as natives, locals, informants, collaborators, subjects, research assistants, and key informants (Okely and Callaway 1992:177). In the interactive frame of sociology there is a definite move to include "the other" as the interactive story depends upon recognising how meanings are constructed by these others. The use of "Members' accounts" give a very different impression of the level of involvement that "the other" has within the research, since being a member of the research illustrates their original meanings (Garfinkel 1967). However, the various styles of interactionist ethnography still consider these individuals to be members of a social life being researched and not part of the academic world of research. By trying to cross this

boundary by the use of auto/biography I encountered many dilemmas. The word I chose to use was participant as I felt that this described my objective of participation in the research, but I did not realise that this participation remained located in the world of “being there”. Being there was a social relationship. I attempted to cross the boundaries of participation with the facilitators by discussing at depth the challenges of methodology in the academic world. Martha was reading the same qualitative methodology text

book as myself. I was asked by Claudia for any references that may assist her in her research. Both these facilitators were also wanting the academic recognition of the research they were doing. As well as crossing the research academic boundary, my relationship with the facilitators also crossed the social boundary. I stayed at their houses, I met with them for other social reasons. Friends of mine met them through their interest in the work they were doing, for example Claudia let two friends of mine use her therapeutic centre to practice their Yoga. With the participants of the Seed group and the RC group, the research relationship involved my peer group, my social group, people like myself that because of certain life events had sought to join this type of group. Therefore in this auto/biographical style, what remains important to the research story is located in the analysis. The stage of analysis involved shifting through these various layers of stories to finally focus upon the stories told to me and how the groups had encouraged and taught the members to become competent story tellers in this style. This is the only part of the story that the analysis could make any sense of.

The analysis.

I was left with the stories from others and my story of the groups. These stories were now removed from the interaction that occurred, the stories were now texts. “Being there” was a verbal form of story exchange, “being here” was to experience these stories as text. The role of listening and observing was changed into the role of reading and interpreting. This is how such reading and interpreting progressed.

Qualitative analysis of splicing and splitting, coding and sorting appeared to take aspects of the story and enable connections to be made, but the important focus

was to look at the content and the structure of how, where and why the story had been told. By using the analysis of stories I was able to keep the texts whole. As Rosenthal states, the important questions asked look at the whole production.

"Is the biographer generating a narrative or being carried along by a narrative flow in the story telling? How much is the biographer oriented to the relevance system of the interviewer and how much to his or her own? What is the hidden agenda? Why is the biographer using this specific sort of text to present the experience or theme? Which topics are addressed? What biographical experiences are left out, what events and periods are covered?" (Rosenthal 1993:69-70)

These specific questions that address each text are then placed within the broader sociological questions posed by Ken Plummer. *"The first question concerns the nature of the story"*, identified here as a self-discovery story. *"The second question concerns the social processes of producing and consuming stories"* that are shown in the analysis of the group techniques and practices. *The third question concerns the social role that such stories play*, in this research I argue that such stories are part of a response to dealing with change in modern social life. They enable the individual to transform problematic life events into positive areas of growth. *"Finally, a fourth question should address issues of change, history and culture"* specifically linked here to the development of a therapeutic culture (Plummer 1995: 24-25).

By asking such questions I am able to show the competency of the facilitators' stories. This also reveals the distinction that arose in the analysis between those who had attended more of these sorts of groups, as more able to tell a distinct therapy story than those who had experienced this for the first time. Dawn, the teacher in the RC group, tells how the interview is the first time she has done anything like this but her story reveals how other aspects of her life have encouraged her to speak out, such as the formation of her political beliefs and her training as a teacher. Two of the WISE group participants reveal an interesting contrast: because of their age and experience in this self-discovery work, I find myself returning to the role of listener and the power dimension returned to "I will tell you my story". These two women are very experienced in the facilitator role and run groups themselves, and they clearly identify their attendance at the WISE group as support. The third member of WISE, whose explanation for attending the group changes from support to help, returns to the role of a learning participant.

The facilitators' stories' were the first to be analysed in this way. The reading of their stories revealed so many similarities that key areas of content and structure could be identified. The content of the facilitator stories revealed the definite narrative structure of defining the self. The structure showed how personal episodes of experiencing this sense of an inner self were then followed by defining this inner self. This definition proposed what this inner self meant to themselves and others once the experience was felt. The themes used to define and describe this sense of self concerned connection and disconnection. The experience and definition of this inner self was a sense of connection that progressed from personal relationships with others to a recognition of a spiritual connection beyond social life. This connection was frequently compared with feelings of disconnection when this inner self is not known, or hidden through negative aspects of social life. This narrative structure was echoed in the story of the participants. The participants also told of how they had experienced this feeling of an inner self and used similar methods to describe this feeling of connection. In the analysis this content was identified by developing a system of coding to show how this theme of connection was structured into narrative episodes, therefore proving a way of comparing these themes. I include some copies of this coding in the appendix.

The structure of the story telling in the facilitators' stories demonstrated that the process of self-discovery was identified as a path or journey. The coherence and logic of the facilitator's stories is found in the confirmation of this inner self. The metaphor of a path or journey to discover this inner self provided an analysis of the story telling stages that each story presented. I developed the analytical concepts of setting off, discovery, reconstruction and proclamation. From following this analysis of the story telling stages, I was able to look at the nature of the story and identify a story of salvation. How they had saved themselves from ignorance and found a new belief. Therefore I propose that the analysis of storytelling through its content and structure progresses the qualitative analysis of linking and coding of data. As the data ultimately remains a textual presentation it is important to read the whole so that the parts that are assembled to make the story are recognised.

Following this format the participants' stories revealed many similarities and differences. The similarity was the echo that was heard in the experience and

definition of the inner self. From my journal, the story of what happened in the groups revealed a distinct process of how this part of the story telling is taught. From the emotional confessional to the retelling of this experience into the group story, the process of reconstruction is demonstrated. The belief in an inner self becomes the shared belief and purpose for the groups. The difference was the way that each participant chose to develop the main theme of her/his story. The stories revealed a distinct major and minor theme. By applying the analytical categories of major and minor I was able once again to see the coherence and logic of the story told as a whole.

Therefore the analytical decisions I made having started from qualitative techniques of dividing the text, led me to the possibility of interpreting the texts as wholes. I suggest that this is a particular strength of applying the analysis of story telling strategies through the identification of content and structure to the stories told and observed, although such analytical strategies meant that I disappeared from the text. It was the analysis of others and in the analysis of myself in the groups I also became another. I conclude that this is analysis. As shown by the psychotherapeutic reconstruction of stories in this research, by entering a new way of looking at the way you tell your story, you bring forward a different way of placing yourself in the text. In this stage of analysis I placed myself in the text as any other group member which was indeed what I was when being there. The analysis is the selection and organisation of the research story and this research story is one part of the whole. While the term auto/biography had challenged the research relationship to encourage the possibilities of friendship and informality essential in this context, the use of auto/biography did not alter the stage of analysis. "Being there" was a very different experience than "being here" with their words transcribed at my disposal. When I was there, this power felt minimised because I was part of many relationships that had many dimensions of power. "Being here", with the transcripts removed from that setting in both time and place, the situation is removed from interaction, where I ultimately retain a power of creating analytical devices that may change the story told in its original sense. This power of creation is mine because the stories from the others become mine through the placing of these stories in text.

It is only when I return to the final stage of "being here", the writing up of the whole, that reflexivity can be engaged again. I look at how the research story is reconstructed and fitted into the sociological practice. So why had my initial aims of joint interaction, participation and contextualisation, ended in the stage of analysis? This sense of collaboration with the facilitators and the participants ended when the story became mine and I took it away. I had hoped to keep in contact with all the research participants sending them copies of my work for their comment. I had sent copies of the transcripts for comment. The act of sending the analysis for comment did not take place. The reasons why are numerous, on a practical level, time, effort and money can be seen as instrumental. However, I feel the key factor involved is the social relationship, which ended as I moved away from this world of self-discovery to the stage of being here that demands an isolation with the data that becomes your own. This move from one world to another demands very different techniques to achieve a very different aim. Collecting data necessitated involvement, analysing data produced detachment. Therefore I propose that any analysis has to reach this stage of distance that I had tried so hard to avoid. It is this experience of distance that transforms the story. Moving from an interactive relationship to the words on the paper creates a distance. It is this distance that enables the researcher to change her allegiances, the relationship to the story transforms. The stage of analysis is not a shared understanding in the world of the therapy groups. Analysis is creating a shared sociological understanding. With the story empty of interaction it becomes a text ready for interpretation in the eye of the reader. One example of this was the interview with Lesley and James.

This couple had met at the seed group. As they sat and heard each other talking about their involvement in the group and their past it brought forward many issues of their being together. They commented at the end how the interview had had a therapeutic effect upon them as they had gone through many emotions and feelings towards each other. Reading the transcriptions does not evoke this experience at all. The story telling in the interview was a face to face interaction and the use of words to describe in great detail what feeling was being presented may not have been included. Therefore the story that remains in the text is the exploration of their own self discovery that also mentions the problems of their relationship, but

the main body of the text is the self-discovery story, about how they tell about themselves in a different way than they used to. This is the story that I am seeking to place in my analysis, I am not looking at the therapeutic effect of the interview relationship. This separation is also observed in my journal, between my personal story of self-discovery and the self-discovery story through the observation of the group processes. The story of my participation in the groups includes many experiences of my involvement there, but as my analysis progresses the important parts of the journal that I select to include are chosen because they help my academic audience understand the social practices of the groups and the techniques used to teach this self-discovery story.

In the “going there” stage I became very aware of how the various strategies of analysis use the criteria of objectivity to present a serious story to their audience. This objectivity makes many assumptions that has resulted in the invisibility of the researcher and ignored how the text has been produced. I argued that my evolution of an auto/biographical ethnography would keep myself visible as the research relationship was acknowledged, and as I was identified as the narrator of the story, its production would be shown. While “being there”, I was aware how the concept of auto/biography was interpreted in the different worlds of the self-discovery groups and the academic setting of listening to the research story of the groups. The process of distance, that is leaving one world for another, is the act of analysis to reconstruct the auto/biographical ethnography, which changes the hyphenated relationship between the I and others to become my story. This new story of mine is framed and practised in the context of sociology. It appears that in doing so I am producing my sociological identity as distinct from my identity in the groups.

Dorothy Smith identifies this contradiction of producing sociological knowledge in feminist practice, where the research relationship of distance is challenged through the acknowledgement of feelings and emotions in the research setting, but this challenge disappears in the writing up. Dorothy Smith argues that this is because the reconstruction of the data enters the conventions of sociology. She argues that within these conventions our understanding of objectivity is so pervasive that it is very difficult for the research to be told in a different way. It appears that the sociologist must change the experiences that she seeks to describe in order for it

to be sociology. (Smith 1989) Through this stage of being here, I have experienced this notion of objectivity as the act of distancing, that is taking interactions in context and placing them into texts. These texts are then interpreted in a whole new frame and social practice. Therefore the change can not be avoided. It is the same process that occurs in the psychotherapeutic setting. The individual goes with the experiences that she wishes to talk about into a new setting and is taught a new way of reinterpreting these experiences. The individual's story is reconstructed. Reconstruction is the aim of all the social sciences, if this reconstruction is practised with the application of reflexivity, then the stages of reconstruction are identified.

The combination of theories presented within the postmodern umbrella, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, language philosophy and feminism and the placing of reflexivity as leading the research agenda, (Smart 1993, Bauman 1988, Lather 1992)) leave me with many dilemmas as I attempt to produce a reflexive sociological knowledge. Therefore the problematic area that I identified in keeping the subjective a priority through an auto/biographical perspective has returned to the representation of my story. Reflexivity is a stage beyond the original experience. Describing how I felt in a particular context, automatically changes the original experience. It is through this process that the knowledge may be described as being more objective in the way that it is removed from the original experience and retold in a different way. Reflexivity is bringing yourself to language just as autobiography is. Both are telling stories about yourself to someone else. In this setting the stories are then transformed to fit into another frame and practice of autobiography. Any story telling where you tell about yourself, is a way of knowing this self that you are telling about. In Chapter One I developed a clear link between the telling about yourself and the concepts of self-identity and selfhood. The analysis of the alternative therapy groups reveals specific strategies of story telling to show how such self-identity stories may be reconstructed. The therapeutic practice depends upon this story telling process as the means of changing the interpretation of experiences, reconstructing life stories (Craib 1989:98). The link between narrative and identity enables changes in identity to be explored. As Widdenholtm (1993) states, psychotherapy seeks to communicate, reconstruct and redefine how the individual tells her story. Thus in my research the substantive story has a direct

correlation with the methodology that creates the research process. This methodology is the self-discovery of the research process as well as the research topic. If *"the autobiographical perspective has to do with taking oneself up and bringing oneself to language"* (Gunn cited in Benstock, p. 11.), I have used this perspective in the groups to create my own self-discovery research story. I have many strategies of retelling the story. The analytical stages that identify the processes of story telling, that I use in the following chapters, have enabled the story to move from the inner, participant world of research, to the outer, academic story of sociology. Where the task of the therapy group is to reconstruct the members' self-identity stories, the task of research is to reconstruct my sociological identity. By presenting this auto/biographical ethnography it is the integral constituent of reflexivity that explores this movement on both levels, the self-identity in the therapeutic practice and the sociological identity in the academic practice. As Merton states,

"full-fledged sociological autobiographers relate their intellectual development both to the changing social and cognitive micro- environments close at hand and to the encompassing macro-environments provided by the larger society and culture" (cited in Stanley 1993:43).

Where Mulkay emphasises,

" the self referential character of the sociological discourse is not something to be hidden or rejected, but rather to be welcomed and celebrated" (Mulkay 1989).

I suggest that I can achieve both: the exploration of self-identity and sociological identity can be explored through myself remaining the reflexive producer of this auto/biographical ethnography. From this I could say that my entry into the research world, the telling of this story, has given me the ability to tell the research story with a more definite sense of identity as a researcher.

Part Two:

The Therapy Story.

This is the stage of the research process where I change the story, from the story of what I observed and what others told me, to the therapy story, the auto/biographical ethnography that now becomes a sociological interpretation of the self-discovery story. This is the research process, where I have certain analytical strategies to make this research world explicit to a particular audience. So what exactly have I done? I thought I was challenging the indicators of objective assessment. I thought I was encouraging the celebration of the subjective where I did not have to pretend I was distant or uninvolved. This certainly worked being there. Being here is very different. Part Two begins to read like any other research. Why? It's as if I have disappeared again from the text. Where are my emotions, my feelings, that I so wanted to place alongside the others. It is because this is not a story of my own self-discovery. I have not told you any of my experiences. How I responded, how I felt, who I fell in love with, who came round to my house. No, I haven't really told you anything of my story. Being there, involved two selves, the new self of researcher that was open and the old self of me looking at me. Me looking at my past, my relationships. It was if this new and old self existed side by side. During the group process my old self took over: I was "me" who went through all the feelings and emotions of my past and present and wanted to create my future. The present was the story telling of the groups, where I was a member. The awareness of myself as a researcher and teacher at the university was also a new story and a new group to which I belonged. Therefore the stories I told here had a different framing and social practice.

It was in "being here" that I became a biographer, I took the stories of others away to transform them into this sociological therapy story, to tell to a new audience. This is the way of story telling. Here I become the self of researcher to tell this story. This self-identity story of myself as researcher contains many conflicts that I have reflected upon as the analysis has come to an end. I took on different story telling strategies in the analysis. These strategies have moved me into a different way of understanding and presenting the self-discovery stories. The telling of this story has been a key constituent in the formation of my sociological identity.

Chapter three.

The Framing of the Self-discovery story **and The Nature of the story.**

This chapter links the analysis of the written documentation that accompanies the groups (see appendix), with the facilitators' stories told in the interviews. I have chosen this link as it demonstrates the way that the self-discovery story is framed by the facilitators' knowledge and experience expressed in the interview setting and presented in the introduction to the groups. From this exploration I conclude that a distinct promise accompanies the self-discovery story: the promise of salvation where a better, more informed individual will be found and saved from the disconnection of social life. The knowledge that informs this framing is shown by mapping the main influences from western psychology, eastern philosophy and spiritual traditions. The thematic analysis of the facilitators' stories illustrates how this knowledge is linked with experiential knowledge of how an inner self is discovered. The inner self is defined in clear contrast with a harsh and deceitful experience of a social self. The nature of the story, the analysis of the whole, is told in the style of a story of salvation. I have used four analytical stages to show how the inner self is discovered, developed and assimilated into an experiential knowledge, which is proposed as having the potential to save everyone from the limits and restraints of social life, and promises a new spiritual awareness. Each facilitator's story told how the discovery of this inner self leads to the experience of a truth not found in social life. This analysis reveals the prevalence of a firm belief in an essential part of yourself that connects the individual with many layers, the people, the environment and a spiritual awareness beyond social life. In the self-discovery stories the social construction of self-identity is argued to result in disconnection, where the truth is hidden from the individual. Identity in a self-discovery story is found through the theme of connection, with a new awareness of a deeper understanding of life. The reflection of the social science debate of constructionist and essentialist positions appears throughout. In the self-discovery story essentialism is an understanding of spirituality, made possible because of the particular mix and match of knowledge from western psychology and eastern philosophy. This mix and match is

blended into personal experience, so that the knowledge is presented as a subjective description.

To present these themes in the framing and the nature of the self-discovery story, this chapter starts by illustrating the promise made in the introduction to the groups I participated in. The promise is found in the written introduction to the group, which each participant has access to before, or during the group and retold in the facilitators' stories. The written documentation that accompanied the groups, and the theoretical influences acknowledged by the facilitators are summarised. The content of the facilitators' stories is then presented to show a thematic analysis of how the inner self is defined. This shows the fundamental belief in an inner self that reveals a hidden experience of spirituality. This is then linked to the way that the story is presented as a story of salvation, that this experience of spirituality can rescue the individual from a false social life.

The initial introduction to the groups.

Re-evaluation Co-counselling: written by Harvey Jackins founder of Re-evaluation Co-counselling (RC) and used in the introductory leaflet sent to prospective participants.¹

"RC recognises that everyone has a natural and inherent ability to recover from the effects of the hurts they have experienced. This automatically occurs through a process of emotional release or emotional discharge (laughing crying yawning, shaking trembling and sweating. The problem is that these processes of emotional release are inhibited through a misunderstanding of their meaning and how they work to heal the hurts. So people are denied the benefits that automatically occur when the process is allowed or encouraged to take place. These include: 1) a revaluation or appreciation of one's true self, 2) fresh insights into the "reality" of our human nature....."

The Seed Group: written by Tony, the facilitator, in an introduction to this group.²

"What we attempt to do in the group is to acknowledge and work with the internal process of self regulation. This is what keeps our body and mind in balance throughout life and growth. Self regulation expresses in our everyday life as such ordinary but powerful spontaneous movements as sneezing, shivering, orgasm, and laughing. In the psychological realm, self regulation is experienced when we cry to release emotion, or when events from the past press to be felt and released, and in dreaming. Spiritual experience also appears to be an aspect of this action as self-regulation moves towards expansion and growth". "The seed group reintroduces us to the ability to our being to heal, balance and reach for its own psychological growth".

¹ A copy of the RC introductory leaflet is placed in the appendix.

² A copy of the Seed Group introductory leaflet is placed in the appendix.

"Women in Seasonal Evolution" (WISE), written by facilitator Claudia in the introduction to the group.³

"To explore the seasons and the festivals of the year as outer expressions of inner rhythms and stages of initiation. Thereby linking our subjective and personal life, i.e. our emotions, ideas, loves, hopes and fears with the objective and collective life of our soul which is linked to nature. This may enable us to gain deeper understanding both into and beyond our individual lives, in particular as women of today". "In the group each participants ability to be guided by their own inner process and wisdom is explored".

"You can Heal your Life" an introductory workshop to the self help therapy developed by Louise Hay. Introduction to the workshop written by facilitator Jill.⁴

"Using a variety of techniques, including colour, partner exercises, visualisations, affirmations and group sharing, you will be able to focus on a specific life situation of your choice, explore any limitations or difficulties in this area and begin to attract more satisfaction and fulfilment. We will emphasise how a dialogue with your inner child (the inner self) can be a wonderfully useful guide to your present day adult life".

The promise is set in this introduction. The promise is that each participant has the ability to be shown, guided towards an inner potential for growth and healing past problems. A change is promised where a deeper knowledge of yourself will bring forward this ability to heal and grow, as illustrated by the natural and inherent recovery in RC, the mind and body in balance in the seed, the link with the collective soul in WISE, and the guidance that will attract a more satisfying life in Heal Yourself. This promise is reiterated in the written documentation that continues with this introduction and in the case of RC and Heal Yourself continues to form a theoretical manual to show how this may be accomplished. The central exposition of this promise is the belief in an inner self made tangible through emotional expression.

Emotions and Self.

The key to self-discovery is the expression and understanding of emotions. All the groups introduce the objective to explore emotions that are seen to represent some inner part of yourself. The Heal Yourself workshop and the RC Class specifically refer to the importance of emotions in their theoretical base. This follows the psychoanalytic

³ A copy of the WISE introductory leaflet is placed in the appendix.

⁴ A copy of the "Heal Yourself" workshop is placed in the appendix.

reasoning that emotional responses learnt in childhood can limit how you respond in life as an adult:

*"everybody has a natural and inherent ability to recover from the effects of the hurts they have experienced. This automatically occurs through a process of emotional release or emotional discharge that includes laughing, crying, yawning, shaking, trembling and sweating."*⁵

RC proposes that this ability to heal ourselves has been inhibited by social expectancies. Central to their belief is that each individual does their best. While both theories emphasise childhood relationships, great care is taken to incorporate into the theory that no blame can be attached to parents and other important relationships, as we all do the best we can in the circumstances we are given. Hence everybody is basically loving and good. The theory promises that the expression and understanding of these emotional responses can lead to a different way of approaching your life today.

*"RC. Theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential and lovingness, but these qualities have become blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (fear, hurt, loss.....) Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by the use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, etc.). However this natural process is usually interfered with by well meaning people ("Don't cry,") who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself."*⁶

As Louise Hay writes: *"When we are very little, we learn how to feel about ourselves and about life by the reactions of the adults around us. When we grow up, we have a tendency to recreate the emotional environment of our early home life".*⁷

Therefore LH proposes that if you have experienced a very negative past you not only continue this negativity but actively create it in your present life. Change is promised to alter this way of acting, as the course description says:

*"...understanding and letting go of negative beliefs about yourself, discovering more about your inner child... experiencing the power within you and working with loving yourself and others more and more".*⁸

Central to this is the use of the term *"pattern"*. This is found throughout the RC and LH theory. A *pattern* is a group of behaviours that are defined as a negative learned response. The RC and LH techniques promise to change these patterns. It is important to note that these two groups have a vast amount of theory documented to accompany the practice. Each group has a published book that acts as a manual. This is also shown by the use of the terms *"class"* used by RC and *"study group"* that the Heal Yourself group

⁵ Re-evaluation Co-counselling Introductory Sheet sent out to interested participants. Compiled by local RC community, theory taken from material written by founder Harvey Jackins..

⁶ RC Guidelines for the RC Communities, November 1989 Edition

⁷ Louise Hay: *You Can Heal Your Life*. Eden Grove Publications 1988. p.9

advertises itself by. Here there is a definite association with the possibility of individual change being taught and learned. Therefore a clear teaching objective of the RC and LH approach is to express emotions. Both these theoretical models are set and defined centrally, in North America, with new publications regularly. Newsletters are published by the local RC community that relate this theoretical model to the local groups. Louise Hay continues to publish more books on relationships. The book that accompanies this workshop "You Can Heal Your Life" has sold three million copies in this country since 1988.⁹ The initial model was devised from LH's personal recovery programme based on western psychology of positive thinking. This understanding of empowerment used in both the RC and LH theory is a collection of psychotherapeutic thinking from the humanistic school influenced by Carl Rogers (1978). This empowerment idea implies that each individual is in control of their own lives and they are able to negotiate choices in a positive way. The power of positive thought is illustrated by the use of "affirmations" in LH theory and "commitments" in RC.¹⁰ These are self-help tactics to repeat positive statements about yourself. The scope of theoretical information that accompanies these group also illustrates it's own distinct development of discourse. Many terms are used, such as the reference to affirmations and commitments already mentioned. A discourse analysis would reveal in more detail a very specific language that seeks to define this new body of knowledge that is being taught.

In contrast to the mass of theoretical support that the RC and Heal Yourself group receives, the Seed Group and WISE are presented from the experience and evolution of approaches devised by the facilitators, Tony and Claudia. However this difference in the theoretical approach also exhibits many similarities. These groups do not have the accompanying manual to follow, the methods have been devised by the specific blend of knowledge selected by the facilitators. The stress is upon experiential learning. The facilitators have designed a brief leaflet of information to present the theoretical background of the groups to the interested participant.¹¹ Therefore the childhood analyses of damaged social relations does not appear in detail here, but are a part of the underlying knowledge in the close association of the self and emotional expression. This is shown in the table I have drawn on page 96 to illustrate main theoretical influences

⁸ Leaflet to advertise group, written by Jane, the facilitator.

⁹ Guardian. 14/5/96.

¹⁰ Examples of these affirmations and commitments are given in the appendix.

acknowledged by the facilitators. Tony, Hy and Claudia, all have a clear awareness of psychoanalysis and therapy from Freud to the more "unorthodox" schools of Jung and Reich. The written information that does accompany the Seed Group immediately stresses the importance of emotions, which shares many similar characteristics with RC theory. Basic emotional expressions are defined as "*sneezing, shivering, orgasm and laughing*" ¹² are similar to those observed in the RC description of "discharge". Discharge is the term used in RC for this release of emotions.¹³ The Seed Group introduction states how these emotions, the basic expressions of life, are inhibited by society.

"If we block expression of our basic living drives and feelings, we not only build up internal tension, but we also interfere with the delicate ways our being balances, heals and expresses itself".¹⁴

This restriction of emotions from the inhibitions placed upon the individual by society is central to the RC theory of social change. RC theory discusses at great length oppressive social structures, class, gender and religion. These oppressive structures are said to interfere with the individual's ability to relate freely. This theme of social restrictions and how social life limits the potential of emotional expression is clearly expressed in all the facilitators' stories as I demonstrate later on in this chapter.

The written information to the groups, RC, LH and Seed Group, all explicitly state that individuals have this ability to heal themselves from the effects of social inhibitions and repression. This healing is perceived in many ways. The RC makes reference to past hurts, which are emotional pains, hence it is the "discharge" of these emotions that has been inhibited by society and the corresponding release constitutes a restorative practice. The Seed Group also promises through the practice of "self regulation" to "*reintroduce us to the ability of our being to heal, balance and reach for its own personal growth*". Healing becomes described as an innate, inner ability that is found within. This innate ability is made apparent through the discovery of an inner self made tangible through emotional expression. This sense of self is also linked to the promise of personal growth. As illustrated by the above quotation from the Seed Group, healing is also the ability to "*reach for its own personal growth*". The LH theory states

¹¹ Copies of the leaflets are in the appendix.

¹² Tony Crisp, Introduction to Seed Group. p.1.

¹³ Fundamentals of Co-Counselling Manual. Personal counsellors Inc. Rational Island Publishers Washington 1962. p.7.

¹⁴ Seed Group Introduction. p.2.

*"Awareness is the first step in healing or changing".*¹⁵ The RC promise that proposes the appreciation of your true self, also states that you will gain the opportunity to realise *"unlimited potential"*¹⁶ Therefore from these three groups the association of emotional expression and discovering an inner self promises the opportunity for healing and personal change.

In a similar way the WISE *"experiential course"* places this element of personal growth as the key objective. In contrast, the promise of healing is not made explicit in the leaflet that accompanies the group, although healing is a main theme in the facilitator's own story of self discovery. The facilitator states very clearly that WISE is not a therapy group, it is a support group. The psychoanalytical emphasis upon childhood repression is not observed in the initial information. The emphasis upon the promise of personal growth is clearly expressed through the description of experience. Life experiences are proposed as ways of gaining understanding. This experiential claim to knowledge is present in all the facilitators' stories and is observed more in the information that accompanies the WISE and Seed Group. The placing of experience above a more traditional approach to teaching and learning gives this theoretical background an ability to develop a wide range of techniques that promote this experience. Central to this experience is still the situating of emotions. Emotional release and understanding this expression, are the means to reinterpret this experience into the knowledge references given within this group. From this individual experience the reinterpretation of life experiences can be identified with a wide range of references, gathered from psychoanalytical teachings, and the eastern philosophical influence in spiritual teaching. The *"deeper understanding"* promised by the WISE group is said to promote individual change through a growing understanding of how we are linked to a wider collective life. The WISE group theory presented in the group introductory leaflet says that emotional life, the inner self is *"linked to the collective life of our soul which is linked to nature"*. It is the exploration of this link that enables a deeper understanding of our lives. This illustrates a theme of experience and growth where emotional expression is seen in this understanding of life experiences. The importance of this association between experience and growth is that the experience also becomes spiritual. In this example of experience and growth, a qualifying criteria is attached, which implies that this emotional expression must be a "true" experience. It is this measure of authenticity

¹⁵ Louise Hay p. 55.

that is used to distinguish an inner response from other social actions and behaviour. This spiritual message forms another aspect of the promise made in all the groups. The spiritual message is where the individual is connected with life beyond social understanding. It is from this connection with healing and personal growth that individual change is perceived on a wider level. Louise Hay's "Heal Yourself", theory combines the western psychology model of how each individual can recognise her/his own power with eastern philosophical concepts of divinity. The theory states that each person is 100% responsible for all their experiences and that choice exists in how to create and respond to these experiences. Nevertheless, this ultimate individual agency resides alongside the belief in a universal power, which is referred to in many of her affirmations as the universe.

"I am totally open and receptive to the abundant flow of property that the universe offers. All my needs and desires are met before I even ask, I am divinely guided and protected and I make choices that are beneficial for me".¹⁷

The Seed Group introduction describes this change as the experience of yourself in connection with a "whole".

"It does this by clearing out old habits of tension, past emotional traumas. As it achieves this work it moves to personal growth and creativity, opening spiritual experience of yourself as part of the Whole"

Theoretical exploration of the groups illustrates how this spirituality is defined from the mix of knowledge that underpins the approach. Whilst all agree that it is the expression and understanding of our emotions, our subjective life, which is central to the therapeutic process, the methods and final interpretation of this process differs. The Seed Group and WISE emphasise the experiential aspect of their self discovery. They do not need to present detailed theoretical support as the experience is said to be the teacher. This experience will unfold and become clear to the individual involved. This emphasis upon experience links to a wider understanding of collective life. Louise Hay's work can be seen as the development of western psychology present in positive thinking that also uses descriptions of spirituality expressed as "*the universe*", "*the process*" "*the cosmos*". The psychoanalytic framework used in these groups, developed from the ideas of Jung, have influenced many of their evolving thoughts of psychology. In particular Claudia, the WISE facilitator also introduced two areas called "process psychology" from the work of Mindell, and "transpersonal psychology", directly related to Jung's work. More

¹⁶ RC Information Sheet.

importantly the influence of Jung signifies a move away from the traditional psychoanalytical model of expert interpretation as a form of understanding to the development of your own expertise. This alternative approach promotes change through the metaphysical references of transcending and transforming. It is this element of transcending and transforming that provides a direct link with eastern spiritual traditions.

"The theoretical basis of the course draws from both Eastern & Western traditions particularly those that I have studied and experienced in depth".¹⁸

In contrast the theory of RC remains firmly located in social terms and explicit reference is made to changing the society we live in. The RC theory presents a contrast with this spiritual message as it remains located in social liberation, to become free of all socially formed oppression. Individual release from past hurts is associated with changing social practices to prevent these hurts happening again. Social restrictions are removed. The RC theory was developed in 1962 and its basic model has changed little. Working to create positive social relationships is a key to the work. The theory demotes any understanding of spirituality as belief systems are argued to be a form of social oppression. Despite this disclaimer of spirituality the story of the facilitator, Martha's own self discovery story, demonstrates how this older model of counselling has been incorporated into this belief in the universal and the cosmos. Martha integrates RC theory into her own experience of spirituality. This mix of theory and personal integration is also seen in Jen's story where the scientific model of neuro-linguistic programming becomes associated with the spiritual philosophy of Hawaii.

It is from this development that I suggest the framing of self-discovery groups use psychotherapeutic techniques, but they rely heavily upon finding some meaning for life beyond the social. This notion of spirituality can be seen in the holistic definition of health that is promoted in the understanding of alternative health, the triad of mind, body and spirit. The concluding theoretical exploration of the self discovery groups suggests that:

- the inner self is made tangible through the description of emotional release and understanding this experience of emotions.
- the promise is to enable an inner ability for healing and personal growth.
- this individual change is linked to wider social and spiritual change.

¹⁷ Affirmation from LH You Can Heal Yourself. p. 126

¹⁸ WISE group introduction.

This is also reflected in comparing these groups with the work of the other facilitators interviewed.

Michael and Patricia run a group called "*Weaving the Spiritual Path*", in the advertisement for the group the spiritual message is very explicit and linked with the terms of health and therapy:

"The aim is to become better informed, a calmer and more steady human to deal with stress and perhaps to shine with a light when all around is dark. The course which is practical and participatory looks at many aspects including healing, meditation, colour, planetary changes, the human body, earth energy ley lines, ancient wisdom Teachings, crystals, holistic living, health and therapies".¹⁹

Chris, the facilitator of a men's group uses very similar references as Claudia in the WISE group. He runs a group called Earth Body that looks at nature, the myth of the green man and seasonal changes to explore masculinity in association with the psychotherapeutic knowledge of Reich. From an advertisement for one of Chris' weekend workshops "*Earth Body*", he describes his objective as:

"Creativity and personal ritual mark the turning of the earth and the passage of our lives. Reichian bodywork, personal ritual and time in nature are used to explore appropriate forms of initiation".

From this theoretical exploration of the framing of the groups the different knowledge used can be summarised in the following way: the association and combination of western psychotherapies, eastern philosophy, ecology, myths and legends and specific spiritual regimes. What is vital here to this understanding of alternative therapy is the ability to select and authorise your own particular blend of understanding. Central to this blend is the primary influence of the accumulation of western psychology and eastern philosophy, specifically the number of references to Buddhist thought. The easy assembly of Buddhist thought into western systems of knowledge is especially shown in this alternative field in the development of transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology is the practice of Jung's theories that attempts to combine this western and eastern understanding of the individual. This east/west mix is expressed at all times. It is this that forms the central message of self discovery. It proposes firstly that there is a self to be found and that this inner self is frequently trapped by the social world.

¹⁹ A copy is placed in the appendix.

The table represents the accumulation of different bodies of knowledge used in the facilitators' approach. I have used a rating system to illustrate how certain major influences may dominate the approach used in their work when compared to other influences that inform the general presentation of their self-discovery story.

❖❖❖ A key influence to the group work identified in this research.

❖❖ A major influence in the facilitators' general approach in alternative therapy.

❖. A general influence in their overall perspective.

	Western Psychology General counselling, Psychoanalysis : Freud.	Unorthodox Psychology Nightingale, Reich, Mindell.	Buddhism	Bodywork Massage, Eastern medical systems.	Yogic Legend Tradition	Nature Ecology	Spiritual Teaching	Channelled Information.
Martha	❖❖❖	❖	❖	❖		❖		
Tony Hyone	❖❖	❖❖❖	❖❖	❖				
Claudia	❖	❖❖❖	❖	❖❖	❖❖	❖❖	❖	
Jill & Peter	❖❖❖	❖	❖			❖	❖	
Mike	❖	❖	❖		❖❖❖	❖❖		
Pat		❖	❖	❖❖❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
Chris	❖	❖❖	❖		❖❖❖			
Jen	❖❖	❖	❖❖	❖❖❖	❖	❖	❖	❖

Having identified the influences used in the theoretical development that accompanies the groups, I now turn to focus upon the facilitator role in framing this story. This shows how the self-discovery story, that the facilitators told in the setting of the interview, is produced from this theoretical input.

The facilitators' self-discovery stories.

The stories told by the facilitators show how this framing is assimilated into their own experience of self-discovery. The detailed analysis of the facilitators' stories explores the content of the narrative episodes and how these episodes are linked together to form a story. Episodes demonstrate a description of the experience and definition of an inner self. This inner self is described in direct contrast to an outer self perceived in the social world. This contrast is achieved through the central theme of spirituality that underpins this understanding of an inner self. From identifying this theme of spirituality the nature and production of the story as a whole is argued to be a story of salvation. This distinct story style of salvation is shown, where this inner self is rescued from its hidden depths, therefore the individual is rescued from the falseness and disconnection of social life.

Firstly the narrative episodes reveal how the inner self is defined.

The contents of the stories achieve the key objective of defining an inner self. I clarify how each narrative episode is assembled, by the location of key words. These words are used to describe a different part of the process that has enabled them to discover this inner self. Experiences are told primarily in relation to feelings and how there are methods of engaging and encouraging these feelings, in other words to bring this inner self into recognition. Finally this feeling self is named and defined in distinct contrast with other experiences of self that may exist. In all the stories the following narrative assembly could be identified.

- A description of how this sense of self is experienced: key words used were sense, touch, experience, felt.
- A description of the processes engaged to experience this sense of self: key words used here were discovery, process, working, transformation, realised.
- A description of how this experience and process reveal and define an inner self: key words used here were true self, core self, essential self, natural self, higher self, spiritual self.

Therefore this inner self is constantly being defined by describing how it was found, what enabled this discovery and what this now means. I will illustrate this in the

stories by firstly presenting Tony's story that shows many similarities with the other facilitators.

The main body of Tony's story centres around narrative episodes, which use his experiences of discovery, gathered from his work with yoga, dreams and self regulation. These experiences illustrate how Tony has developed his understanding of his inner self. He presents a cohesive explanation of how there are two distinct areas of self. Firstly there is a self that arises from social life, which he terms personality. This personality develops from responding to the outside world. Then there is a core self that exists and remains intact irrespective of the outside world, although it may remain hidden:

"I feel that if I look at myself carefully, or look at what I see as my sense of self I see that almost I am an interface between two very big opposites, a very down to earth opposite, every day opposite, that arises out of impressions and experiences that come from my senses, or my ability to sense. So that is one opposite and that I identify with waking life. On the other side of it when I sleep and outside of dreams I actually have an experience of not existing. Put in another way, of being egoless, and although that's a sort of a shadow land, there does seem to be a core. It is something that exists, it is self existent."

This core self is described as giving a different experience of reality.

"The very core, centre and it doesn't seem a sense of ego or self as I know it. The best, the very best experiences of this suggest that "I" as that aren't an individual at all. I am the very process that exists in all beings. I am that, I am the Process that exists in all the phenomena in the world and that is basically how I see as a sort of a straight definition as it were."

Each episode centres around supporting and defining this core self, how each experience has led to him realising this inner self. For example, he describes a dream where he is working in a house and discovers an underground tunnel. In the tunnel he sees a serpent that symbolises instinctual drives and thus relates to this core self. The dream ends with the appearance of Christ, that Tony describes as representing the powerful creative potential of this core self. Hence the content of Tony's story reveals that the objective of the story is to define and prove the existence of an inner self and to show how important this inner self is. Throughout Tony's story the core self is described by the examples of life and death, potential and creativity that is said to bring change and resources to the individual. These descriptions are brought together under the theme of connection. Here the theme of connection and spirituality appear to be integrated.

"The realisation of the self as one not limited to the body does bring resources, it does bring change... It leaves you with a sense of connection with the world and people much

more than what may have existed before. It leaves you with a sense of having a right to exist, approach other people and have thoughts and feelings".

In trying to portray this feeling of being "something more" Tony continues to explain how language limits the description and he has had to develop his own concepts.

"I use the word interface but you might use the word soul. I think a lot has been lost out of our language to define a world of personal experience, a sense of internal subjective, one face towards the personal and one face towards the ego, Christian terminology, the spirit, in Buddhism the void, and so it is that interface between the two".

The connection of the inner self to an understanding beyond social life, this sense of spirituality, also brings forward another association made with the example of self responsibility.

"That is one of the effects in looking at this process of discovering oneself, the discovery of more and more of a sense of self-responsibility that one has created the whole sense of beauty in ones life. Quite extraordinary, to a point that I find it difficult to accept intellectually and yet the contact with the self a sense that I created myself, I am the creator, I created my being as Tony, I created the situation out of the pain with my mother I know why I did it. It is revealing yourself to yourself"

Many of the examples he uses of his experiences are told and retold to illustrate similar and different points relating to this experience and validity of this core self. Hence Tony's story reveals a distinct pattern to the narrative episodes, that is the objective to define and describe the experience of an inner self, also shown in the other stories. The central theme of spirituality is found in all the other stories of the key facilitators.

There are many strengths in locating Tony's story as a blueprint, to demonstrate the similarities with the other facilitators. Tony is a well versed story teller. He has told his story in books, television and radio. He has worked in this area for twenty years. The way that the other stories from the facilitators reflect the same narrative pattern and themes are central to this thesis. Although these strengths may also be the analytical weakness, as Tony was also my first interview, his public story may have predisposed my listening to this tale of spirituality.

Hyone's story was told alongside Tony's, she was his partner and co-facilitator of the seed group. It is therefore of no surprise that her story follows a similar objective that uses the same themes. However, Hyone does not repeat Tony's defining key words. Hyone brings her own experiences forward to make her own definition of this inner self.

Firstly she makes the distinction between different forms of self. Hyone identifies an inner self that she calls the *"bigger I"*, which is connected to life in a much broader sense, *"the ocean"*.

"My experience has been, my terminology would be, my bigger self and my little self. That is how I see it, she describes the experience of travelling from Australia to England as a very emotional time when she was looking over a boat at the surf formed by the boat, "I suddenly realised that I was a bubble for a moment incredibly beautiful, but nevertheless my life span as I know it personally lasts that long. I felt that it was the bigger 'I' that understood this and that I get so caught up in the little I, that is the emotional turmoil that almost traps the other sense of one self, that I almost loose the ocean that I come from".

This sense of self is perceived as going beyond the body, an image used by Tony. Hyone describes how this relates to her everyday life:

"I feel that very strongly if I am driving a car I feel as if my senses go out beyond the car so I know what is coming around the corner. I put my feelers out. So I have enlarged my space, it literally feels like a physical space"

The content of Claudia's story reveals the same theme of spirituality and connection. Considering the framing of the theoretical background and how their group work is devised, Claudia and Tony share the same influence from the psychotherapy of Jung, and Eastern philosophy, especially Buddhism. Claudia, the facilitator of the WISE group, works as an acupuncturist and has developed her therapeutic style from a variety of sources such as Steiner philosophy, Chinese philosophy and transpersonal psychology. She uses the same theme of defining this inner self in relation to a spiritual feeling that brings connection and a different awareness. This is described by similar examples of life and death, creation and potential. A difference emerges in the way that this sense of self has been discovered. Whereas Tony's core self is described from his own discovery of his therapeutic work, Claudia's definition of a spiritual self has arisen primarily from her contact with spiritual teachers. Claudia describes her contact with a spiritual teacher that she studied with locally:

"Which was another avenue to find the real self and god from the Hindu tradition. It was not intellectual, through karma yoga you realise god through your true self devotional work. What ever you do, you do for love. That was the most radical transformation. The self was covered in black soot and it was beginning to be polished to shine through".

Claudia's story revolves around her discovery of a spiritual self, which she has learned from her spiritual teachers and how the experience of this spiritual self is a recognition of a true self. This spiritual path defines a true, higher self in contrast to an ego self, which Claudia says she learned from an Indian Master called Bobagee. These teachings enabled Claudia to "... tap into those states of pure life".

"Constant surrender to your higher self. We all have such big egos its hard but when you are with a master, its easier. Six weeks with Bobagee is like six years in psychotherapy. Very intense and I had allot of wonderful experiences. You just do what you can, you don't judge it you don't know what the result will be. He taught me to let the false self go. All you can hope is to be used as a channel. At the end I felt so deeply accepted and loved".

Although Claudia's story centres around her spiritual journey, reading from Buddhist teachings and telling of her experiences with spiritual teachers, Claudia also seeks to stress the link with this spiritual self and psychotherapy from the transpersonal school. In combination with her other influences from Chinese medicine she also stresses this inner self as a natural, essential, being.

Another theme in Claudia's story, also present in Tony's and in his introduction to the Seed Group, is the theme of healing. In all stories of the facilitators the definition of an inner self, the awareness of the theme of connection and the self responsibility this brings, all point to the need to help others. Hence healing becomes defined in this way. Healing becomes another way of discussing change and realising potential. Claudia describes how her spiritual discovery has recognised another level of understanding healing. Here the most beneficial therapeutic relationship is when both parties, the expert and the client, become in touch with their inner, natural self.

"As I knew the self that is beyond our neurotic persona and I became more interested in the therapeutic relationship, I understood that when the patient gets involved in the process (of healing) they realise their true potential. I had done a Steiner course, an educational system about children realising their potential and their artist, the spiritual dimension. The whole system was to foster the spiritual self. The healing comes when you are and I am in touch with my natural self, you have the right relationship. You could just blow on them to get better, that is what I am striving towards. I know when I am true, close to my true self, it's not what I do but how I do it that makes me a good or lousy healer".

The same spiritual sense of self is defined by Martha, the facilitator of the RC group. This definition of an inner self clearly separates a social identity from a spiritual identity, described as the material self and the spiritual self.

"The material self, this self requires maintaining and sustenance, food and shelter and I'm a conglomerate of the experiences I have had. Then I guess there is the spiritual self". "Maybe self is the construction and it is the essential nature. The construction the cultural, the essential nature is the self with plus and minus and then there is spirit, non beingness".

This illustration from Martha's story clearly shows how this identification of an inner self is described by the experience of connection that can both be told in very spiritual terms or words that also imply meanings of nature and natural. This is very similar to Claudia's story. Here Martha links her recognition of an essential being directly with being connected with the universe.

"I am getting in touch much more with my essential being rather than my constructed being. I guess it's something about it's provided a sense of essential nature. I see it in children, people who have been working on themselves and in artists. It's about trusting the exploratory process of thinking of working out. I think it is a very spiritual thing, it is about recognising one's place in the universe. If you are part of the universe, we are stars, stars are us, we are the earth. When you get into that place where you feel completely at one with where you are, what is happening with another person. It is about what we all strive for knowing that loosing the boundaries to get back to that boundlessness, the not I".

This similarity with the stories of Tony and Claudia highlighted the common denominator of this east/west mix of knowledge. Martha works within a western defined psychotherapeutic method developed by RC. As noted earlier in the chapter, the theoretical framing of the RC story of self-discovery remains located in the social explanation of a inner self that is free from social oppressions. In Martha's story she has this strong spiritual definition in her own experience of this inner self that is told alongside the RC doctrine.

"We construct self as a separate entity as an individual. To each person the self is a social self. I guess it has different planes, and yet you cannot get to know yourself until you have recognised what that self is and its construction. It's like one of the liberation theories in RC which is that we can come into the world and stand very firmly to our given identities, race, gender, colour, age. All these cultural identities that we hold onto but the more we discharge and release the hurt we don't have to attach ourselves to those identities at all. They stop us from seeing who we really are and stop crossing boundaries".

The Inner and the Outer.

From identifying this spiritual theme that exists in all the facilitator stories I have formed the contrasting descriptions of an inner and outer world, made by Tony, Martha and Claudia, into tables. All the stories use the understanding of a spiritual connection in their identification of an inner self, which is presented in stark contrast with a

description of outer, external, social factors that may harm, hide or disguise the recognition of this inner self. I have used the facilitators' own words.

Tony uses many examples of the contrasting social self where our sense of self may be manipulated, disconnected and follow misleading drives. I have placed this contrast in a table to highlight the opposing characteristics.

Social, Outer.	Inner, the Core.
<i>Social norms. the drive to conform the institution of the church</i>	<i>to find out what underlies, our instincts the sense of the holy within.</i>
<i>disconnected our sexuality, controls our sexual drives.</i>	<i>Inner self of existent radiance</i>
<i>individuals as socially manipulated. ...lost their sense of innocence.</i>	<i>our inner guidance</i>

Martha uses the problems of society to bring forward the contrasting components of a social self. She provides a very distinct narrative of the social versus nature. Like Tony's use of boundaries Martha sees boundaries as a social concept that can create tension and fear. By finding your true nature these boundaries are no longer necessary.

Social	Nature
<i>constructed personalities</i>	<i>own perceptions, judgement, experience</i>
<i>manufactured desires</i>	<i>essential needs</i>
<i>frameworks of belief systems. cultural constructions.</i>	<i>rootedness of what it means to be alive</i>
<i>fear defence division boundaries, from cultural norms & practices</i>	<i>connection</i>
<i>Stop us from seeing.</i>	<i>true nature = enlightenment</i>
<i>imposition and invasion</i>	<i>obscures true nature</i>
<i>material self</i>	<i>spiritual self</i>

Claudia also tells of many examples of how the social is a false life when compared to the inner truth.

Social life	Spiritual life
<i>unhappy, divided, separate, lonely, living in a world that makes no sense.</i>	<i>a place of peace and harmony feeling right inside</i>
<i>civilised world, false values, consumerism, chasing the wrong gods</i>	<i>states of pure life.</i>

<i>frantic business</i>	<i>true self to look inward</i>
<i>fear of discovering another reality</i>	<i>enlightenment is real illumination and realisation.</i>
<i>layers of confusion</i>	<i>the nature of life</i>
<i>False self.... covered in black soot.</i>	<i>The Buddha self, the healthy enlightened shining self</i>
<i>the ordinary world is a fantastic elaborate vision that blinds us to the...</i>	<i>ordinary natural nature of the mind.</i>

I now compare the stories of the key facilitators that led the groups in which I participated to the stories of the other facilitators interviewed and find that this spiritual theme is continued.

Chris, the facilitator of the Men in Nature Group, distinguishes different parts of the self using the psychoanalytical theory of Reich. This, as with Tony and Hy's distinction provides this description of an inner core.

"Reich had this threefold view of the outer veneer, the sociability, the manners, and the niceness, if you scratch through that in any psychotherapeutic way, you get the bitterness and the hatred and the yucky stuff. Then at the core, this is the place where we really want to meet, full of love that got messed up in childhood hence you develop the other layers".

Like Claudia, Chris works with the association of spirituality and nature, ritual and natural rhythms. The next illustration from his story shows how his discovery of this self awareness through developing a therapeutic medium that uses ritual, reveals these different aspects of self and connects this inner self to another level beyond social life.

"Ritual opens you up to a part beyond the everyday ego self, there is something else going on here, it's not just my conscious rational choice. When I think of me, Chris, there is the social self. I'm a father, a husband, but is that actually who I am? I am actually the atoms that make up the rainforerst. If you think of humans as imaginative to realise that although we are not special to the universe we do have a particular conscious, we have the self conscious part we are actually now co-producers of the universe".

Chris' identification of a core self is said to bring a new awareness described as a sense of connection that he locates firmly within terms of nature and ecology, Buddhism and therapy.

"It's like having a relationship with God that people talk about, God doesn't go away, this awareness doesn't go away. I just get too busy, if I pause and slow down, being in nature that's the one for me. Being in nature makes me aware I am connected. It gets my attention out in a therapeutic sense, and it reminds me of a greater reality, it places

that "I" that ego sense in context. That awareness, looking back, actually developed out of my suffering, again from the Buddhist teachings, I am not a Buddhist but these teachings are in my life. It is precisely because of the pain that I got into therapy. That was not into feeling better, it's about being more real acting more authentically and knowing my true nature. It sounds mystical or Buddhist, but it is something about not feeling better, sometimes its about feeling much worse, if you are feeling unconscious you may not feel anything. It's not at all about feeling better it's about feeling more real. More whole, more alive".

Jill, the facilitator of the Louise Hay workshop, defines this inner self awareness she has found.

"I have always understood in my life that there is a real me, the essence of who I am inside and everything around is just the way I live in the world because I happen to be a human being this time round. Rediscovering and getting in touch again with the essence in me. I have a sense of it within this body. I would describe that original experience as me and I have experienced that since. The Me, the essences. My self is my personality, the ideas I have , these will disappear when I die".

Like Claudia, Jill and her partner Peter mention the important influence of a spiritual teacher. Both Jill and Peter work in a clearly defined psychotherapeutic setting. Peter has psychoanalytical credentials and the doctrine of Louise Hay's work is clearly based on the psychology of self empowerment. Again the spiritual identity of this inner self is proposed and a chosen guru in this spiritual teaching is named. It is the spiritual teachings of Barry Long that gives Peter and Jill their definition of the "me" inside everyone.

"Barry Long for me is someone who speaks about the source of god, love. He actually calls it ME, not him, but Me, Me in me and Me in everyone. He is talking about the ME inside of all of us".

The spiritual theme of self-discovery is made very explicit in the work of Pat and Michael, who facilitate a group called *"Weaving your Spiritual Path"*. Their spiritual definition is related to the experiences of travel, contact with different cultures, reclaiming ancient knowledge from Christianity, developing new knowledge from working with crystals and colours. The psychotherapeutic mix and eastern teachings are clearly present in their contrast of the spiritual self and the social self. Pat explains this discovery of an inner self as her recognition of a godhead within, like Claudia. Pat connects this spirituality with the story of an Egyptian Goddess. As shown in Claudia's, Martha's and Chris' stories, this spirituality is linked to the natural cycle of things and

presented in a direct contrast to social life. I place Patricia's words in a table to illustrate the similarity with the key facilitators.

Social life.	natural cycle
<i>masks that arise from your personality, that play games with you.</i>	<i>yoga as undoing the masks that get in the way</i>
<i>channels our knowledge, loses the essence of self sufficiency. Messages are distorted e.g. the western church.</i>	<i>the actual roots, being part of the natural cycle of things.</i>
<i>turns everybody and everything into a horizontal mode, squashes everything down. Stopping the vertical connection.</i>	<i>Therapies correct this pull, Alexandra, Reich, the need to reach up. The higher levels, chakra points.</i>
<i>Trapped by expectations of work responsibilities,</i>	<i>To go with the flow. To be in touch with the natural cycle.</i>
<i>Energies are stuck, waist chakra, orange and red but that the fabric of society twists this energy to materialism</i>	<i>To transform the energy levels.</i>

Jen's story was developed in California where she works with Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and other therapies such as massage and hypnosis to call herself a holistic health therapist. Her story portrays the development of her work and training. When talking about the changes this has brought to her life a clear definition of a spiritual inner self emerges.

"You have to understand that there is a single self and many selves at the same time and if you get that you are not limited, you can break out and be as many different parts of yourself as you want to be. You can be Marilyn Munroe for a short time. There is one true inner self, inner light that I call the lotus in the heart, but there is a part of us that is multidimensional, that is the part that this planet and this life time gives you on opportunity to play with".

Like Martha, Jen's training in NLP is told alongside a developing awareness of spirituality. Jen describes the theme of connection as a different form of consciousness.

"When we all have unity consciousness heaven is on earth it is not up there or down there, its here, it doesn't get any better than this. People who believe heaven exists this is a plane of existence that has tremendous opportunity. You can live anywhere you want and be who ever you want but people are locked into following depression following copying what other people do. We have choice we don't have to live there or be that. This is what the new paradigms are all about. That is the beauty and excitement for me. Realising that I can be anything that I want and be everywhere".

The Story of Salvation.

The identification and definition of the inner self therefore reveals a central conclusion. All the facilitators use a different combination of knowledge to frame this concept of self-discovery and they all work with a different emphasis upon this influence, but they all converge in the telling of a sense of spirituality through the description of connection. This spirituality is contrasted to ideas of an outer social world that is at odds with this inner feeling. The beliefs drawn from psychotherapies, eastern philosophies and other traditions are used to support this identification of the inner self at odds with a false society. It appears that you cannot discover yourself without this recognition of connection with life beyond the social milieu. The analysis of story telling now enables me to move on from this thematic analysis in the definition of this inner self, to show the nature of the stories as whole texts. The transcripts of the facilitators' stories do not read as clear stories with beginnings and ends associated with any chronological order. It is the theme of spirituality through the description of connection, which is developed to provide the coherence and flow of the story. All the facilitators refer to this self-discovery story as following a path or taking a journey. By using this metaphor the narrative episodes are transformed into telling about their inner journey and what they have discovered. This metaphor of a journey is also set as a journey of transformation where they have changed. It is this that gives the story its nature, a story of salvation through its promise to save the individual from the harm of society. The journey of self-discovery is told as a story that frees them from the limitations of social life and brings a new awareness.

To explore how the story is assembled into this tale of salvation, I have imposed the analytical stages of setting out, discovery, reconstruction and proclamation. The stages are used to demonstrate constant similarities in all the stories. The free fall story telling, encouraged by the active, creative interview, and set by the introductory terms of self and health, resulted in an assembly of episodes that only gain any sense of unity and cohesion from the metaphor of a path or journey of experiences. The facilitators in the interview setting all tell their story in different ways, but the metaphor of a path and

journey enables the story teller to provide a cohesive and coherent progression to the tale without having to attend to the demands of a time sequence or location. The description of a path or journey of self-discovery provides its own trajectory.

The Analytical Stages.

- Setting Off (the why),
- Discovery (the how),
- Reconstruction (what this discovery means to the individual),
- Proclamation (what this discovery may mean to the world).

Setting off is the description of life events that brought the facilitators to engage in particular questions associated with finding out about themselves. The setting out point is a strip of narrative that illustrates motivations and interests in starting this path. It may occur at the beginning of the story, though more often it appears anywhere in the story as a means of introducing another episode. This setting out is a stepping stone, where the life event itself remains in name only, without any detailed description. Life event problems such as childhood, marriage and relationships, divorce and separation, are all mentioned, but this remains the step into telling about how these events precipitated their entry into some sort of therapy or spiritual endeavour to understand themselves. Tony has talked about his relationship with his mother and how this led to problematic relationships in later life and he describes how the self discovery work has altered this. He then uses this path as a means of introducing another stage,

"That was the route I took, which was a long winding route through childhood even rebirth stuff, but I began to wonder if there was another way of doing it"...

Hyone's setting off point is shown in the example I gave previously in the quotation where she sees herself in association and connection with the ocean. Hyone describes how she was on a boat leaving her home, when she suddenly realised that there was more life than her emotional turmoil. Martha's setting off point is described as resulting from her problems with relationships;

"I've always been interested in the effect of emotions on behaviour. There were things going on in my life that I felt I was just getting into some repeated and occurring patterns in relationships with people that I felt some how weren't right. I guess I was looking at various models of the therapeutic process and all the reading I had done around all the analytic models seemed disempowering. You went to an expert, a specialist. I need a recognition that my feelings were somehow affecting my behaviour".

Martha continues to describe her involvement with feminism and awareness of the personal and political that brought her to look at RC. In addition, Martha illustrates another interesting aspect of the setting off point, which is repeated in other facilitator's stories, the introduction to this form of therapy by a friend.

"Then I met an artist she had just come back from a workshop and she came back from it in a very glowing and vital state. There was something about the way she talked about it".

Claudia's setting off point refers to the experience of enlightened glimpses.

"It's a very simple way being yourself meant to be in a very happy state. feeling at peace feeling at one with yourself and the world around you. As a child and an adolescent I had moments of that, where also there were enlightened glimpses, if we think this is happening. What I call enlightened glimpses of something profoundly good and meaningful".

This recognition of enlightened glimpses Claudia continued to describe through Buddhist teachings, *"looking into the nature of the Buddha self"*. Claudia defines this discovery of a spiritual path as distinct from a psychotherapeutic path though both leading to the same end, that of enlightenment. *"The Buddhist tradition is through a master, other paths do it in other ways like through psychotherapy and the groups we do"*. Later on in the story Claudia describes this setting off on a Buddhist path being initiated by the discovery of acupuncture:

"I think deep down there has been a realisation that I'm not in this life, most of us are not. In a desperate search to find something that is natural that would help me come closer to the real reality my first path was through acupuncture and the Dow philosophy".

Jill describes a particular experience of setting out on the beginning of this path that was nothing to do with problematic life events. She relates this to her natural curiosity, which has always existed through her life and led to constantly wanting to find out things for herself.

"I went to an International college to do my A levels, I was walking along the cliff tops one day with a friend and he as saying all you have to do is be honest with yourself. Suddenly I had this intense experience right through my body. I remember collapsing on to the grass and rolling about laughing because suddenly I knew what he was talking about which was in a way pure knowledge. I knew why I was on this earth, why everybody was here ultimately. I felt I loved everybody. I felt I was love. It was such a joyful experience".

Later on Jill describes her setting off point on a path of discovery as being influenced by many things:

"...psycho-awareness, discovering yourself and the meaning of life for yourselves through meditation and many ways".

Peter's setting off point is described as:

"It's a very ordinary story. I was married. I had a house and all that stuff. I have written about it and the first sentence I wrote was that my life exploded in my face. That is what it felt like. I then became heavily involved in therapy. Although the beginning of my interest in psychotherapy was seeing an advert in the newspaper for the sixties for a therapeutic community. I don't know why I was interested in this path and others are not. I had a very straight forward upbringing, went to grammar school in a seaside town".

Chris, the facilitator of Men's groups and RC member, describes his setting off point as similar to that of Peter:

"I got into co-counselling, the first kind of any therapy or growth work I did, 12 years ago because I was splitting up from my first wife and my son who was 3 years old. I didn't know what had gone wrong, I couldn't have even told you I was emotionally devastated, I was doing a poorly paid job and I spent every lunch hour in the park trying to sleep because I couldn't sleep at night. I happened to know two people who taught me co-counselling, one to one, and then I became involved and then I started to own some of my feelings. I had got into such a mess because I was completely unconscious in the marriage".

Jen's story, based in California, described her setting off point as:

"I think it is pretty simple thinking of the path I have followed which has been one of self discovery. About 11 years ago I was in real estate and was married to a psychologist from Berkeley and we had quite long and interesting discussions. One of the things we decided to do to improve our rapport with our clients in the business, we were very successful, was to learn a science called neurolinguistics (NL) and NL at the time was a fairly new science of helping people to use their brain to get their desired outcome".

At a later stage of the story she then describes the beginning of this path from the discovery of nutrition:

"...it started off with nutrition, nutrition changed my life learning I was what I ate, then to NLP as a science. I have had a variety of holistic practices. I am a holistic health practitioner currently working in a PhD as a philosopher of new thought. Goodness knows where that is going to lead. I am going to write about yoga the new yoga.

These examples of setting off points illustrate the metaphorical use of beginning a path or journey and while on this journey constantly finding new ways. The setting off points describe how the individual may have always wanted to know more, to ask questions, to find out. Or the experience of personal problematic life events. The actual setting off points identified as the beginning of a path or journey change. They remain stepping stones to lead into the important discovery made. The stress is upon the identification of the move onwards, what discoveries these experiences led on to.

Discovery.

The discovery stage forms the main body of the story, it is the dynamic aspect of telling about the relationship between the search and find. One aspect cannot be told without the connection to the other in some form. For example the search may involve coming across a new therapeutic approach or body of knowledge that brings about a new finding. Or the findings of this route of self discovery are portrayed as an overall development and benefit of this search. The importance of this discovery stage is how one thing does lead to another. It appears that once the individual is on this path or journey, the next discovery is just around the corner.

Martha's discovery journey continues and brings her in contact with the community of RC, that she continues to become a trained leader. She also mentions the influences of Zen philosophy, Alexandra technique and Yoga. Claudia continues her path of discoveries from acupuncture, following a Hindu teacher, to six weeks with the guru Bobagee, to transpersonal psychology, and Steiner education. Through all this search Claudia emphasises the findings of the spiritual, *"the Buddha self, the god head within"*. As mentioned in the setting off point Tony is continually looking to discover new ways for people to follow this route. For Jill this setting out experience led to the path that followed many approaches to discover this feeling of finding yourself. She states that:

"I knew I would continue to look. It was quite a relief to know that one thing led to another. I don't know why I had that original experience".

From this setting out, Jill describes a series of methods of discovery. She decided to do psychology at university, Transcendental Meditation and a few years later EST. From these discoveries she found:

"I met people who were interested in this meaning of life, experiencing and talking about it. This is where the active work started, looking at myself and the importance of words"

As she continues a constant reminder is given of how one discovery leads to another.

"I was going through terrible depressions I didn't know what to do I was in terrible pain. I looked to Christianity but that didn't help. I realised that my relationships had the common factor of Me in them and maybe I had something to do with the fact that none of them worked. I was ripe to hear and open to hear ideas about responsibility that got me to sign up for this course. I remember learning about the other person as a mirror in relationships".

Peter's path of discovery progresses from living in a community in India, the influence of Rajnesh, psychotherapy training and the present day influence of Barry Long, a spiritual teacher.

"He particularly speaks to me about the importance of relationships. This has clearly been my path through self awareness. Relationships are the mirror. I see relationships as the major force propelling people into self examination."

Jen has gone on to discover many things, the spirituality of Hawaiian Huna, Yoga, Massage, accessing higher guidance to lead to her description as a holistic health practitioner. Pat's story sets off with examples of how she began to realise herself as a distinct person, in which she claims that Yoga was one of her main influences in later life. The way that Pat's story flows, demonstrates how the telling of a specific influence reveals all these stages of setting off, discovery and reconstruction. From this description of yoga as the setting off point, Pat discovers the spiritual side of yoga and is therefore able to reconstruct this knowledge as a way of absorbing inner truths.

"...Yoga teachers, and doing my teacher training made me really look at myself. Yoga teachings brought me to look for the god within. The reincarnation ideas came initially from these ideas and then from the Yoga, feeling that I didn't want to go and find an Indian guru, it wasn't me, it was to find a way of absorbing those deep inner truths within myself that hopefully also kept me with other people".

From this, her journey explored Christianity which she found to be very "stuck" and then she followed a spiritual teacher of the Buddhist tradition. Pat also became interested in, *"all sorts of body work, touch, colour, massage and started to use this"*. Pat has, also like Jen, found herself to be in touch with the spiritual world and describes herself as a receiver of channelled information. From all these discoveries Pat reconstructs her findings to describe herself as a priestess where the inner self represents the goddess part.

Michael's story is also set as a spiritual adventure although his setting off point remains very diffuse. Michael states that:

"It is that knowing oneself, knowing you are in search for something more to life beyond this planet", "I have chosen to run like a child down the beach across the sand wadding into the water, cold and perhaps a little frightening and the metaphor I use...I have opened my eyes under the water for the first time I realise I can see under the water".

Michael's path of discovery involves finding early Christian beliefs, Jungian psychology, travel to other cultures, meditation, New Age, crystals & colours and environmental ecological discoveries. These discoveries are presented as the basis of his understanding:

"It's been my good fortune to have many things that have enriched my path and given me a greater understanding, If all I am concerned about is my survival on this planet in

this rat race, I will use it to the expense of every one around me, If we are concerned with the before and after life as well as some sort of spiritual self this drives me to look at myself, my inner self, my guidance”.

This final quotation from Michael’s story illustrates how the discoveries lead on, but are not left. The stories describe how these discoveries are integrated into a new way of seeing the world and understanding. This is the stage of reconstruction.

Reconstruction.

The stage of reconstruction links closely with the discovery. This is where the search and findings are brought together to formulate a distinct way of defining and clarifying understanding in the person’s life. This reconstruction shows how the new discoveries are adapted and applied to their ways of relating, working, and to show an evolution of beliefs that frame their perceptions of every day life. Tony describes many benefits that result when the core self is touched and recognised. Therefore discovering this core self is a practical resource. These benefits include a different way of relating and understanding life from a new awareness. This returns to my thematic analysis that showed the theme of connection, which goes beyond the individual and society towards a recognition of a greater force or power described as the “universe”, “cosmos”, “void”. An example of how this description becomes a new way of seeing a particular life stage of growth in adolescence is told by Tony.

“...the touching of the self is just one of them. There are many others that go on in the discovery of self. The realisation of the self as one not limited to the boundaries of the body. It does bring resources, it does bring a change although in the end it may be even appear ordinary but you have gone up a step as in puberty....

It leaves you with, a sense of connection with the world and people much more that what may have existed before. It leaves you with a sense of having a right to exist and approach other people. The right to have thoughts and feelings and also leaves a sense of hidden resources that are there if you dare step out. You can do things and express yourself, that you can put behind you and within you as a resource”.

In the reconstruction stage Martha describes a very different approach to her life.

“It’s had a vast impact on me before using that model in my life teaching going to workshops I was a container of difficult, bad, uncomfortable, critical, self critical, unaware of my abilities, very hard on myself very tight, and obviously all those feelings transformed themselves into relations with other people. I had difficulties in my behaviour I had addictions that I was not in control of at all. My life was dominated by this stuff. I didn’t have any sexual relations in the terms of not being able to relate on an emotional physical level. I had sealed myself away. Working with this conflict, feminism was a great awareness realising it was not all my fault and then being able to

put into practice to release. Also to realise my potential and realise the dreams I had as a child it just seemed like a wishful and fanciful idea no way could I achieve any of those. I've become clearer and clearer more focused and engaged. It about the process of shedding the illusion about I can or I want and I can't".

Martha's reconstruction also illustrates a change in her understanding of consciousness: *"This is all I have, this is my life, my consciousness, my awareness my existence. (refers to Zen) those attempts to understand the meaning of life are metaphors for the journey but in a way those metaphors are in fact meditations. In the West we try to qualify and quantify instead of inhabiting the metaphor..... the self is a medium for the universe at some level. When I see those leaves the wind comes into my nostrils. What is going on? Has the wind become me or have I become the wind?"*

The stories from other facilitators also clearly exhibit this stage of reconstruction. Peter presents the reconstruction through describing his work and the key concepts behind this approach:

"The mirror is constantly there, how do I relate, am I getting what I need, are my needs getting met, am I satisfied and what am I going to do with it. Which is similar to what is happening in the body, the body says I 'm hurt, I'm in pain, do something about it. Healing starts from any source but it is essentially from pain. Life is suffering and we experience pain for the purpose of feeling... Me is a useful word because we all know what we think it means. As I understand it the word me is my experience of being alive, the consciousness, and that extends to being with one with the universe.... Going towards the light, there is no doubt that this light is waiting to be found in here, this Me, this consciousness is this and goes on to assert, to become itself".

Jen is clearly able to reconstruct a new way of understanding her past, her present and future through the assertion of choice:

"What it means to me is to come from a deeper belief in myself through what I have experienced with people not through a book...For anyone who realises that they have this power within themselves, not from a text book not from a counsellor not from a spiritual path but inside each individual is this power. That you can shift destiny. Within each individual is this power, this energy, force, godhead what ever label you want to put on it. It has a lot to do with realising choices. The more I realise I have choice in everything the more creative I become. Writing, dance, Yoga anything I want to do I can do it. It is not a judgement anymore about how far do I take it. I am no longer judging I am just being".

In the self-discovery story of Chris, his reconstruction of the discoveries he has made are directly linked with a new self awareness of "realness" also echoed by Claudia's continued definition of a self that contains real feelings.

"... it's about being more real acting more authentically and knowing my true nature. It sounds mystical or Buddhist but it is something about not feeling better, sometimes its about feeling much worse, if you are feeling unconscious you may not feel anything. It's not at all about feeling better it's about feeling more real". Chris.

"...very natural real and right way of being". Claudia.

Hence this reconstruction stage is the constant defining of this inner self identified earlier on in the thematic analysis.

Proclamation.

From this reconstruction, the story advances a proclamation. I have deliberately chosen the word proclamation here to represent the strength and importance of the message as perceived by the story tellers themselves. The strands of the story that emphasise the benefits of this path and journey, the discoveries made for the benefit and change of the individual are now related to the benefit of all social life and the existence of the planet itself. Hence this proclamation serves as an important structure to present the consequence and objectives of their work. This stage of proclamation shows the overall theme of salvation. If you follow this path a better world will be achieved. This story of salvation has now moved in the medium of therapy. The spiritual understanding of this inner self provides the essential connection with the proclamation announced.

Tony forms his proclamation where his own discoveries and reconstruction could help others and develop a different world.

"My experience of this sense of self this core I experience it as the core of all religions. Everything from every culture is talking about this core, even in different languages we are still talking about the same thing, even if we use different words. I don't have a conflict with different view points, different cultures. The new type of attitude will avoid any conflict and transcend those boundaries. The people holding onto the boundaries will be threatened because it will be as if you are taking what is absolutely necessary to them. I see this to explain conflict like the IRA and any terrorist conflict. I do sense that we can leave the ego behind like we leave childhood. We transcend and we are back in the garden of Eden and just as we create this dream this sense of our life, we can create our reality in a way. I feel that there is a possibility if other people wake up we cannot but help re shape the communal dream and that flows on in a different way and I sense this as a real possibility".

This ideal of a better world and an improved way of living is echoed in other proclamations. Tony's Garden of Eden is reflected in Peter's description of Utopia.

"The relationship between self awareness and society is going in both directions, acting out unconsciously and acting out positively, the negative side also exists. There is no doubt in my mind that we will not have this utopia without individual awareness. Because without individual awareness we are manipulative because of that our societal structures follow the wrong lines. When we become more individually defined then we will have the structure that we can afford, now we have the structures we deserve".

Pat also uses this word Utopia to express a vision of what the future could be.

"We have this possibility in each of us to experience, we have this ability in each and everyone of us to experience ideas. This is where everyone is being asked to actually

discover their individuality, to be their own priest or priestess. We can all find it. Can you imagine a world where everyone was in touch, it would be a Utopia, there would be no need for conflict. As a tulip arises from a bulb we would grow into a fully realised human being".

This belief in individual change and each person's responsibility for this change is directly linked with social change. The onus of this change is placed upon this notion of self responsibility as reflected in Jen's proclamation. Here she changes the description of individual awareness to consciousness.

"The new yoga has got to do with people who get together with unity consciousness, when you change we all change. Responsibility, the ecology is transformed when the individual is transformed so when people are happy you become happy. When people are sick the whole world can become sick. I want to have people in my life who are like me but I also step out to share my message and some people may get it and others may not but that is not up to me. When we all have unity consciousness, heaven is on earth it is not up there or down there, its here, it doesn't get any better than this.

Such proclamations are made possible because this new awareness and new consciousness through the process of self-discovery define a self that becomes connected to meanings beyond the social. This is also shown in the proclamation made by Chris:

"The process of consciousness, the whole thing unfolding, actually becoming aware of itself, becoming self reflective of the whole system, but also each individual processes that occur within. If you think of humans that we are the same atoms of the rain forest to realise that we are not special to the universe, although as imaginative beings we do have a particular consciousness, we have the self conscious part, we are actually now co-producers of the universe".

This connection with life beyond the social, where social change is a result of spiritual change, also is proclaimed to be within each individual as stated by Pat above. Although this is an individual power, there is also the recognition from Pat, Claudia and Michael who emphasis the spiritual path beyond the psychotherapeutic path that there are certain spiritual teachers, masters who can guide you. Claudia reads her proclamation from the Tibetan book of dying, explaining that:

"For all its dangers the world today is an exciting one where our minds are open to new versions of reality. Great teachers like the Dali Lama, Mother Theresa and other eastern teachers visit the west and are winning a larger audience. The desperate conditions of the planet are slowly waking people up to the necessity for transformation on a global scale. Enlightenment is real and each of us in the right circumstances and with the right training can realise the nature of the mind"

This is also echoed by Michael's concluding proclamation:

"In the broadest sense the priest and the healer become entwined, our health and spirit are bound".

The proclamations of the facilitators' stories illustrate many issues. This analysis of story shows the distinct objective of presenting a clear message. The stories give a vision of empowerment through a return to an essential belief. Each individual has the potential within to realise a different way of understanding. The story teller position of the facilitators are revealed as self appointed teachers. The negotiation of experience as the most important factor in the acceptance of this knowledge reveals that their position upon this path or journey enables them to make such proclamations with a sense of authority.

This all revolves around the belief that there is something inside that remains untouched by social construction. The idea of social construction is perceived as false, a series of masks where the true self needs to be revealed. The self-discovery story centres upon this inner subjective world which is prioritised above the social outer world. The purpose of the discovery is to undo the construction and return to an inner truth. Although this can still be related to the objective of psychotherapy (to uncover and change the internal repression), there is also something that goes beyond this idea of release. The theme of spirituality shows how the belief in an essential core, expressed through the inner self, contains a very deterministic constituent, where something is identified to exist even beyond this individual empowerment. There is even more to be discovered than an inner self, there is the recognition of yourself as just one tiny part in a universal power.

This is where the self-discovery story goes further than the debates encountered in the social sciences. Social theories prior to post-structuralism and postmodernity implied an essential nature to the individual, illustrated in the philosophy of Marx, the sociology of Elias, and reflected in more recent works by Giddens (1991). Taking this later example, the problems of modern social life illustrated by the example of increasing consumerism, and commodification are argued in a similar way to the facilitators, to mask and hinder the *"genuine development of self"*. (1991:198). This brief example of an implied inner essence in social theories serves to highlight the difficulty that sociology, in particular, has had in developing an understanding of spirituality. In Chapter Seven I explore this story of salvation in relation to the social science theories,

which suggest how modern western social life has witnessed a decline in the expression of spirituality associated with the decreasing influence of institutional religion, and increasing materialism. The belief in an inner self has been incorporated through the accessibility of eastern philosophy, alternative psychology and the psychotherapy field. The development of knowledge from Jung in particular, a major influence in these self-discovery stories, has been central in bringing forward the spiritual essence of eastern philosophy, especially Buddhism. From this the central belief is the perception of the individual as a person, or as I have now described in this chapter as a "self". Therefore such a belief in the distinctions of a social identity and a spiritual identity depends upon this clear distinction of the person as a "self". It is this "self" that as Martha describes becomes a "*medium for the universe*".

A reflective comment:

Is this right? Are they really telling me a story they would tell else where or have I set this story by the research? All the facilitators were very pleased to tell their story. Once started the story easily flowed. My intervention into the story was minimal. I was the ideal audience. I wanted to learn, other research objectives were obscured by this idea that I was there to listen to learn. I was ripe to hear the message. It was if I was going to be able to prove their message right. I could give them another form of authority, to support the assertion that their work was changing people, and the way that we live. I was also there to prove the value of their story. We constructed the roles of teacher and follower. I also shared my hopes that this might be the way forward. How else could we live in a better world? All I had to do was find my inner self.

No story exists without an audience and its reception is vital. These stories were certainly persuasive and absorbing. "Listen to this Maxine, "You've got to read this chapter yourself Maxine it will show you something I'm sure", "Its so marvellous to have a chance to talk like this" "Do you know that an anagram of Maxine is in exam perhaps you have been examined most of your life and now you are doing the examining"

Again the distinction of being there and being here is drawn in this reflexive comment. I was there, the stories were absorbing and interesting. While there, I heard no indication of salvation, or thought of ways to analyse the stories. They were just telling me about their discoveries. Being here, the entry into my other world of story telling transforms their stories into one grand story, the story of salvation. This is the importance of taking these stories and placing them together. I can begin to see an overview, an overarching story that begins to formulate many questions. Yes, I have always been an examiner of life, perhaps this is why sociology has taken me down this route of self-discovery. I am finding out about myself at all times.

Chapter four.

The Social Processes of Networks and Story Telling

Chapter four moves on from the framing and nature of the self-discovery story to look at where and how this story is produced and consumed in the setting of the groups in which I participated. The groups are where the story is shared and taught. To explore the social processes of the self-discovery story, I look at the role of the facilitators in leading these groups, the members who form the groups, and finally how the groups are structured.

The social practice of the self-discovery story is shown through the formation of the circle. I argue this to be categorical in the production, sharing and learning of the self-discovery story. The way that life experiences and feelings are told and shared in the group circle, through a variety of techniques produces the self-discovery story. The concept of the confessional, developed from the work of Foucault (1984, 1986 & 1988), looks at the role of the facilitator in teaching or guiding this story practice, and how self disclosure is presented in this formation of the circle. The confessional is the structuring of an intimate, private story that then becomes the group story. This is raised in two discussions. Firstly there is the confessional as subjectification, which explores the complexity of social construction and essentialism in the individual. The social constructionist/essentialist content of the facilitators' stories now becomes the sociological question to explore the social processes of the story telling. This advances the problems, which concern sociologists, regarding the oppression and liberation that such therapeutic practices may have on the recognition of this subjectivity.

Secondly the confessional structuring of self disclosure is viewed in relation to the production of the self-discovery story. The group techniques of the circle and the confessional are also discussed in relation to the generic processes of story telling identified by Ken Plummer (1995). This shows how the social practices of the groups produce the story and how such a story is consumed. It is the consumption of this self-discovery story in the groups that concludes the importance of creating a community of listeners and a shared social world of problems, which opens up previously hidden stories for attention of others. Therefore an important result of the

self-discovery story is to become public. This highlights the continuing complexity of subjectification and the corresponding development of belonging and acceptance. Therefore this chapter concludes that irrespective to the dilemma of agency/structure, which explanations of governance and resistance to discursive social practices may bring to the social scientist, there exists another important social explanation that of belonging. The formation of self-discovery in a group setting promotes a shared understanding, a necessary prerequisite for the social processes of story telling. What appears to be the most private and individual discovery becomes a shared story. While the discovery story of this inner self focuses upon a subjective, individual location, it also depends upon others, the social setting of a community of listeners. The telling of stories about yourself in the group setting takes the understanding and definition of the inner self, prescribed by the facilitators, which makes this self tangible. Without this, no one could share or assert its existence. This chapter concludes that it is the social processes of story telling that reveal the many layers of the story.

The Role of the Facilitator.

The understanding of what a facilitator does in this context is defined clearly in Claudia's story.

"So I see myself as facilitator, as thinker about it, and the one who lays the framework, who points to the awareness of the seasonal festivals. I have gone through a conscious journey of the seasons. So I bring a framework and I hopefully give impulses to people to explore this for themselves to understand. I always say to people I am not a therapist, people take their own responsibility for their reactions. It is a learning self development support group. I hold it but it is not in my control. I send impulses through the structure and people can use it for their own journey"

There are two main significant points from this definition. The term facilitator is used to promote self-discovery as a learning process, hence the story is placed in an educational context. This is clearly observed in the initial advertisements and information of the groups that I highlighted in Chapter Three. The four self-discovery groups I participated within all had this link with education. The Re-evaluation Co-counselling is called a "Fundamentals Class". The completion of this class enables you to become a member of the RC community and attend further courses and workshops. The Louise Hay, Heal Yourself Workshop is described as an

“Introductory Workshop” that may lead onto further “study groups”. The WISE group is described as an “experiential course”. The Seed Group remains described as a group and workshop, and does not explicitly mention any clear indication of teaching or learning, although informally reference is made to the “life skills” learnt in the group.

Secondly the role of facilitator is to prioritise experiential knowledge as the most important aspect of learning. As Claudia and the other facilitators’ tell in their stories, their work is an extension of their own journey made to discover themselves, therefore they teach from experience. This is also reflected in how the facilitators present their profiles and credentials when they are advertising their work. For example, during my year of participation I received an advertisement for a weekend workshop on *“loving yourself and your inner child”*, facilitated by Jill. Here her experiential knowledge is stressed in the recommendation:

“the workshop will be a synthesis of many insightful ideas and exercises which Jill has experienced during the last fifteen years of her life”.

Peter, her partner was advertising a one day workshop called, *“Love and Relationships”*. Here he is described in a way that brings together the formal accreditation and the experiential component found in the descriptions of all the facilitators I interviewed.

“Peter is ... “a member of the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners (AHPP) with 25 years of experience leading groups in the UK, USA, Europe and India. He spent seven years with Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, living and studying meditation and spiritual psychology, ‘A lot of my expertise on relationships comes from learning from my mistakes’ He is 49 divorced, remarried and has three grown up children.”

The other example that supports the importance of experience is shown through the prevalence of facilitators, in my sample, who work and live together in a partnership. Sometimes running a group together, or working on their own and with other facilitators. Tony and Hyone, Jill and Peter, Michael and Patricia, have developed this therapeutic work together and have developed a specific living space with the ability to host groups and sessions for individual work. Claudia’s partner is a transpersonal psychologist an approach that she also uses in her work, and the house where the WISE group was held is a centre they developed together for their work. Chris’ partner, Nina, shares the same practice and interest in co-counselling and

psychotherapy, but they do not run a business together. However, Chris developed his work by devising specific groups and weekend courses with other women facilitators. Martha and Jen work on their own and this is reflected in their personal life. The predominance of intimate partnerships in this sample, which extended into this self-discovery work, reflects a central characteristic in this journey of self-discovery that is the importance of relationships. In the psychotherapeutic framing of the groups there are two aspects of this stress upon relationships. Firstly, there is the psychoanalytical mirror, where your attraction to others represents the inner parts of yourself. Secondly, developed from eastern religions and shown in Jung's psychology, there is the idea of male and female balance within each individual. The facilitator partnerships thus express this framing in practice. The external demonstration of male and female balance that work together in private and public, stressed the importance of experiential knowledge as a way of living. Therefore the presentation of an intimate sharing relationship becomes a central example of how knowledge is appropriated into the experience of everyday life. Hence in looking at the role of the facilitators it is important to note that their everyday lives were observable to me and many other group members. Their role was not contained to the social processes of story telling within the group, their everyday lives became reflections of their beliefs and incorporated many friendships with other members.

The facilitators as a group.

The facilitators shared some interesting characteristics worth noting as well as the prevalence of partnerships. The facilitators, are all white, some have a multinational background, Martha comes from Africa, Tony from Italy, Claudia from Germany, Hyone from Australia. The other facilitators were born and have lived predominantly in this country, but all share experiences of travel and learning in America and India. All the facilitators are self-employed, as noted above, they all use their home as a work place. Each facilitator demonstrates many differences in their charges for attendance in the groups. These financial differences reflect the structural issues of where the group is held, for example at home or in rented space, and whether the group is connected with any centralised organisation, such as RC and "Heal Yourself". For example, Tony operates a voluntary system of donation because the centre he has set up is able to underpin the costs of running the group.

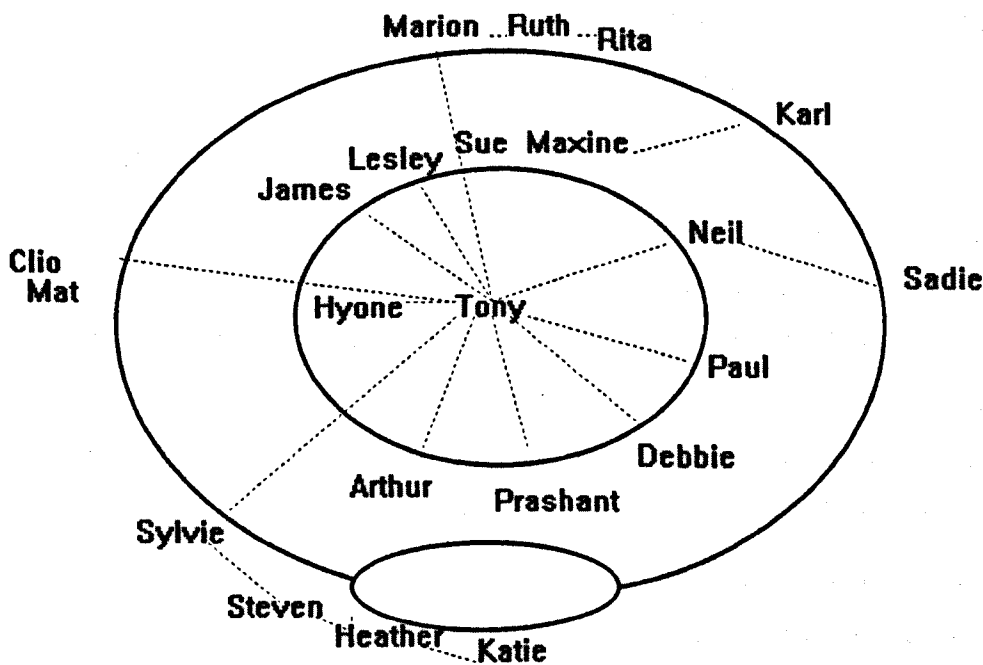
Martha operates a sliding scale relating to a self assessment of income and receives a proportion of this as her fee and gives the other to the local organisation of RC. Claudia has a fixed price of £12 per evening which is comparable with adult education classes, the fee is only payable if you attend. It is difficult to make estimations of the income brackets of the facilitators, I did not seek to ask such questions as I felt this to be the antithesis of creating a free fall story telling environment. Therefore my estimations are based on observation and participation. I observed that within this group of facilitators there were many differences. Claudia with her partner, home and family, her centre for treatment, courses and groups, appeared far more comfortable than Martha, living on her own in rented accommodation and using her lounge to host the group. It appeared that Chris and Nina, Jill and Peter, now living in rented accommodation and struggling to build their work had chosen to leave previously better paid work and financial security. Whatever variations I observed in assessing their comfort and security, it was obvious that all the facilitators were taking a chance in their position of self-employment.

This particular sample reflects the complexity of defining the concept of middle class. An important assessment of being middle class is educational attainment and life opportunities, but this presents problems as their own view of education defined as experience removes the measurement of formal qualifications. This gives the facilitators themselves a very different understanding of educational attainment. For example, Tony and Hyone remain located in work associated with the building trade and child care and they are educated by their journey into this self-discovery world. All the other facilitators have been to university and have worked or had the possibility of working within more traditional professional occupations, such as teaching, financial, and caring work. The development of their therapeutic work is seen as a distinct change from the social expectations of work, although they still need to develop it as an income generating area. Moving on from this practical role of the facilitators, I will now reintroduce the groups briefly and explore the other members of the group.

The facilitators in the group setting.

The Seed Group

The group is held every month, at the facilitators' centre in the SW of England. It is an open group and there is no selection or question of suitability if the person wishes to attend. The numbers of people who attend fluctuate from 6 to 26. To illustrate this membership I have identified three main sections that exist within the overall group. The inner circle represents a core group of regular attendees throughout the year from, 11.9.92. to 25.9.93. The outer circle represents members who joined during the year, for example, Marion, Ruth, Rita arrived at the weekend in January and attended regularly for the next four months. Dawn and Mat knew of the group throughout the year and attended infrequently. Frances became a regular attendee for the last four months and during this period introduced her friends Heather, Steven and Katie who attended twice.



The gender distribution of the group was variable, but usually during most weekends there were slightly more women than men. The diagram of 23 members illustrates nine men and thirteen women. The ages vary from one member who was

19 to two members in their sixties. This mix can perhaps be best shown by decades. Two members were in their sixties, three members in their fifties, three members in their forties, six members in their thirties and seven members in their twenties, (although three of these only attended twice). Their occupations varied considerably. Four members were involved in teaching, two members involved in the creative professions of art and music, two members involved in alternative health centres. Other members ranged from being unemployed, to working in child care, building, tiling, sales and clerical work. A generalised summary places the members of the group as middle class, educated and white.

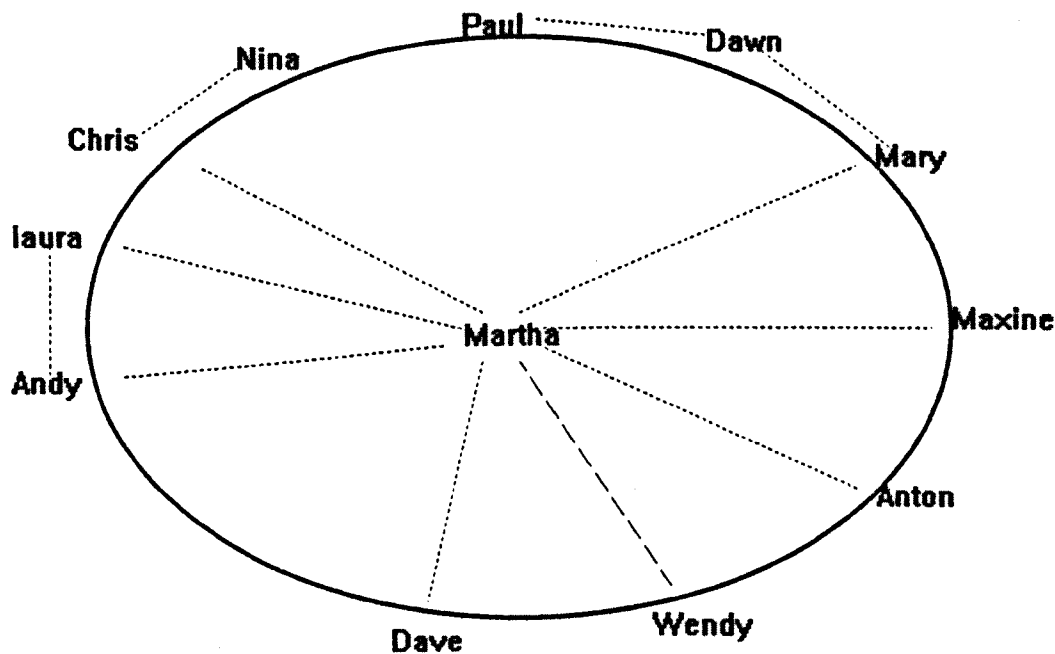
Re-evaluation Co-counselling.

To briefly recap, the main objective of this group was to teach and practice co-counselling. The facilitator operated an initial selection procedure. This allows each participant to become a member of a counselling network, where they would be able to arrange reciprocal counselling sessions with each other. The class was a closed group that runs for 12 weeks. The counselling class had 12 members including the facilitator and two helpers. These helpers were two people requested by the facilitator to assist in the running of this class. They had previously completed a co-counselling course and were already members of the network.

Members of the group.

The group had an equal mix of men and women. Six of the members were employed in varying professions, a homeopath, two teachers, social worker, art therapist, a therapist and a student midwife. The therapist and the homeopath were self employed. All could be described as working in a caring profession. Six members of the group were unemployed, all had entered higher education. Two members were graduates and two members were working in a voluntary capacity with a caring emphasis in the mental health field and with children. Therefore they could all be placed in the descriptive category of middle class. They were all white. The ages were: six members in their mid 20s and six members between the ages of 35-40. From the field notes an interesting characteristic was observed when we were asked to talk about our past. I was surprised at the cosmopolitan aspect of the group members. All the members, apart from Dave and myself, had mixed nationality

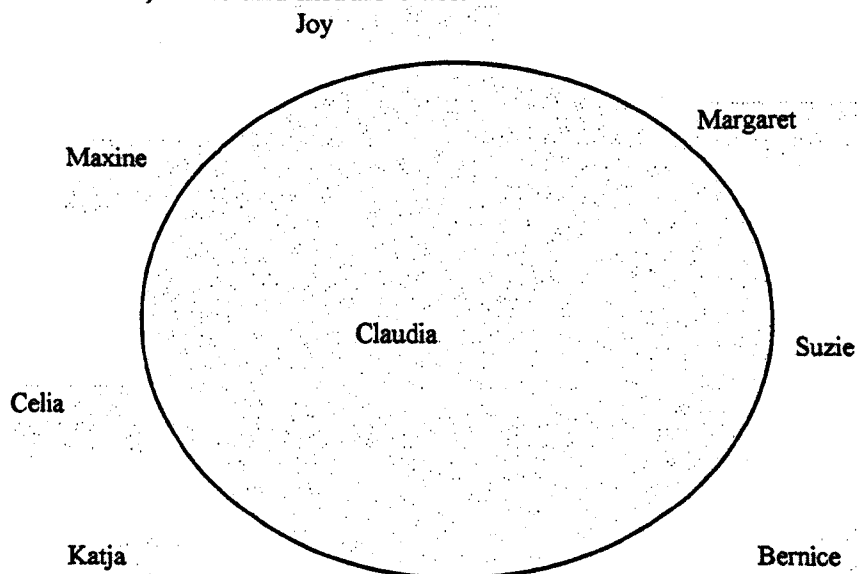
parents, their childhoods were characterised by movement and mobility, especially living abroad. Three members had been to private school. Dave and I appeared very local in contrast, with fathers and mothers working as publicans and sales representatives and childhoods spent in the local setting. The generalised summary of white, educated, middle class can be applied to the composition of this group.



The WISE Group

There were eight women members, and the atmosphere of the group reflected the written objective, of mutual support and understanding. The selection of WISE members was very specifically through a friendship network that developed with the facilitator herself. The WISE Group, like the Seed Group was an ongoing group, but with a closed membership. The group had already run for one year, with Celia, Katja, Bernice, Margaret and Suzie as regular members. Claudia was looking for new members to start the next seasonal year, this became myself and Joy who came later on. Three of the members, myself, Bernice and Suzie were between the ages of 35-

40. The other members were in their late 40s. Apart from Suzie and Margaret, we were all mothers, whose children ranged from 0- 30 years old. Bernice and I were single parents, the other women were all in long term marriages. Five members worked in the alternative health field with skills ranging from Astrology, Alexander technique, massage, Yoga, Seasonal and Celtic knowledge, Acupuncture and counselling. One woman was an anthropologist and the other worked as a secretary. The dominance of the occupations in the alternative health field reflects the selection and objective of the group to be supportive. The composition of the group was female, white and middle-class.



Networks.

The membership of these groups illustrates an important characteristic of networking. Firstly the groups were dependent upon networks for introducing new members and secondly, once relationships within the groups had been established friendship networks extended beyond the group setting. Lastly this form of personal networking became very important for the development of a wider system of information that is explored in Chapter Six.

Networks in the Seed Group.

The connections between members of the Seed Group are very significant. These connections serve as the network for bringing new members and also forming relationships beyond the Group meeting. The Seed Group illustrates three methods of

initiating contact with the group, through friendship, advertisement, and informal networks of recommendation via the facilitator's work. Primarily members of the Seed Group were introduced by contact with the facilitator. This then links to the introduction of friends. For example Lesley met the facilitator Tony through a group advertised at a centre for personal growth near to her home. Lesley then introduced Sue, then Sue introduced me. This example of a chain of introductions is reflected with many members. For instance, Frances met Tony through her work in London, she then attended the group in Devon and later on introduced Heather Steven and Katie. Neil who had worked with Tony, after being recommended to his work, for many years introduced Sadie. I also introduced two friends later on in the year. Marion met Tony through another centre in the SW of England, he ran sessions at various centres throughout the country, following this she came to the group in Devon brought two friends. With all the examples I have given Tony remains the central character. His work brought him into contact with many people whom he encouraged to come to the group.

This set up a precedent for travel networks. Someone living in London would be put in contact with a member living near by, for car sharing. Members came from London, the Thames Valley and further south west, therefore twelve members of the weekend had travelled many miles to attend. The local members came to hear of the group again primarily through contact with the facilitator. Arthur and Dawn for instance had contacted the facilitator for individual therapy sessions because of his reputation for working on dreams. The facilitator then recommended them to attend the group as a progression of their work with him. Other local members heard of the group because they had known of the centre and the facilitator for many years. Every member of the group had some connection with someone and these members were the individuals who maintained their contact. There were 3 other transient members who only attended once and remain unknown to the research. These were people who accessed the group independently by direct contact with the facilitator and had no other contacts within the group so I was not able to follow through their appearance for one weekend.

Once the group was assembled, the connections between members of the group became more complex. This group exhibited many aspects of family and

intimate relationships. Firstly, as mentioned previously, the facilitators' worked as a partnership and James is one of Tony's sons from his first marriage. So the precedent for close relationships was present. During the weekend groups, many relationships were formed. Lesley and James, Dawn and Mat, met at the group and became couples eventually living together outside of the group. Close relationships were also formed on a more short term basis within the group, sometimes just for the weekend. Various levels of friendship and intimacy were a direct result of the workings of the group. Members arrived on the Friday evening, often a long way from their local setting and their friends and family. The environment produced a sense of camaraderie with the sharing of facilities, food and sleeping in dormitory type accommodation. This component of relationships and intimacy both within and beyond the group became an important part of its functioning. The group networks also went beyond individual membership and included families. Lesley's two daughters became closely involved with the group. Debbie became close to another family by going to stay at one of the member's homes. Friendships were also developed by proximity. I met someone who also lived in the same town. Several members lived in London and met there outside the group. The relationships also went beyond friendship and intimacy. For example the group served as an introduction to paid work. Frances brought her sales employment in an alternative nutritional product to the group. She introduced four members to this form of working in sales and many other members were trying the product. Debbie followed the facilitator's contact with an alternative health centre in Greece and gained work at this centre during the summer.

It is important to note here, when placing the members in a networking context, the previous relationship experiences members had been through. Eight members had recently experienced the traumas of a breakdown in their relationship or were in the process of this. Six members were either at present single or involved in a number of temporary relationships in which they were searching for something more meaningful. Only two women came to the group in a married partnership and this relationship was characterised by young children. Hence it can be easily surmised that the ease of networking went beyond the group because social contact

was an important reason for attending such a group. I look at this more in the next chapter. The networks in the Seed Group illustrate how they firstly form the group are then enhanced by the group.

Networks and the RC group.

The first evening identified various relations within the group. Three members Paul, Dawn and Mary were friends and had decided to do the course together. Two members Chris and Nina were partners. The facilitator Martha and the helpers Laura and Andy were known to each other through their previous involvement in co-counselling. Dave knew the facilitator as a friend and I had met her previously through my research. Only Wendy and Anton came to the group as relative strangers.

The social relations established prior to the group were interesting when compared to the RC rules, which explicitly discourage the development of relationships outside of the co-counselling commitment. The rule states that this does not apply to members who have a friendship prior to their contact with RC. Hence many members of the group could continue their relationships. However, Anton and Wendy could not. I discuss the problems that these participants encountered when faced with such a rule in the next chapter as it was talked about in the interview. An example from my own experiences illustrates how friendship at the RC group is discouraged in contrast to the ease of developing friendships at the Seed Group. My co-counselling relationship with Dave developed very naturally into a friendship. We met for counselling at our homes, we shared many similar feelings and life events, we also discovered that I knew his brother well many years ago. The facilitator Martha had become a friend of mine, but this was permissible as we had met before the group started. Martha was also a friend of Dave's because they had met before the group started and she expressed her RC discouragement of my friendship with Dave. The RC group contained a lot of conflicts within the group about who could be a social friend and who could not. While at the same time the group presented the same need for networks as the Seed Group to introduce new members. Here the role of the facilitator in the network was vital as she was central to being in the group, however she retained a clear role of controlling how

friendships and connections developed beyond the group in her capacity to uphold the RC rules.

Networking in the RC group presents an intriguing problem. The idea of co-counselling depends upon an established locally organised network of members so that each member can seek counselling support when necessary. This is referred to as the RC community and in the appendix for Chapter Three I illustrated some group theory from the publication of the local RC Community News Letter. However it also depends upon this community to remain in contact as co-counsellors only, actively discouraging the development of social friends arising from this RC community.

Networks and the WISE Group.

My membership to WISE was through an introduction in the alternative health field. This sort of networking I explore more in Chapter Six. This group was clearly defined by the facilitator as a support group and not a therapy group. A very clear definition of a support group emerged from the participants' and the facilitator's accounts. This function of support was linked to their network. Five members of the group had friendships outside of the group and worked in similar alternative health professions. This was a clear selection criteria operated by the facilitator to provide support for women who worked in this area. There were no limits set to the friendship and intimacy that could occur within this group. However the group remained very respectful of each others' private lives outside of the group and there appeared no need to take this support out of the group setting. As a new member to the group I was aware of the friendships that existed between Claudia, Katja, Celia, Bernice and Joy, with Claudia remaining the central contact. This did not seem to make my role or that of Suzie and Margaret any more difficult. It was the only group that I participated in, where I did not develop any social contact outside of the group. The closeness and warmth of the group seemed very contained within the group.

To conclude from this description of connections within the groups there are two interrelated parts, firstly how the groups depend upon friendships to introduce and maintain membership of the group, secondly how this membership

may develop a variety of relationships between different members. From the intimate relations that developed in couples and between family connections outside of the seed group to the mutual warmth and understanding specifically shared by the women within the WISE group, all involve the expression of warmth, intimacy and cohesion that I identified as central to the group strategies of telling an intimate story. This is the next exploration of the social processes of telling stories within the group.

The Strategies of story telling.

Self-discovery as a therapeutic practice involves very specific methods of story telling. Here I locate the structural aspects of story telling that enables this private inner story of self-discovery to become a more public story of the group. The story telling stages in the groups illustrate the generic process of telling stories stated in Ken Plummer's work (1995:126).

- 1. Imagining, visualising and empathising.*
- 2. Articulating, vocalising and announcing.*
- 3. Inventing identities, becoming story tellers.*
- 4. Creating social worlds, communities of support.*
- 5. Creating a culture of public problems.*

Ken Plummer describes this generic process of telling stories as a series of sequences, that do not logically have to follow each other, but identify a continual process of when a story can be told, when a story is enabled.

From my participation in the groups I have identified two main structural components that facilitate these generic strategies of story telling in the groups. Firstly, the formation of a group circle is basic to the techniques of sharing the story. Secondly, the telling of the private story, self-disclosure, is observed through the concept of the confessional. Added to these structural components, the strategies of story telling illustrate the patterns of interaction that occur within an individual and between others to enable a story to be told to its audience. I suggest here that the groups clearly illustrate the generic processes described by Ken Plummer (1995). It

is difficult to separate each process from the other as they are interdependent in constructing the whole story. By exploring the structures of the circle and the forms of confessional and the generic processes of story telling I hope to illustrate this.

The circle.

Story telling in a circle enables two specific qualities: allowing face to face contact with all those who listen to the story teller, plus enabling the role of story teller to shift from person to person at any time. The quality of accessible facial contact at any time eases the strategy of turn taking. The circle encapsulates both the teller and the listener whenever the roles are exchanged. This exchange appears essential to the story telling of self-discovery. The circle provides the structure to how the story is told, and is used in all the groups, irrespective of the different methods used. For instance the circle always starts and ends the group. The opening and closing circles of the group have important functions to initiate and confirm the process of story telling. It enables an articulate facilitator to set the story, who then promotes participants to visualise their own story, hence eventually all becoming story tellers themselves.

The Opening Circle. Each group starts by assembling everyone into a sitting circle. In the WISE group and Heal Yourself Workshop, chairs were used at times, but the preferred format is cushions on the floor. The facilitator of the group sits within the circle and initiates the start of the group. The start identifies the facilitator as the key story teller. An introduction to the work of the group is followed by the facilitator's own story of why they are working within this group and what has brought them to look at themselves in this way. Personal information is shared about their lives through this introduction. This is clearly demonstrated at the opening of each group. This narrative style of giving information about yourself against the story theme of finding out about yourself is also set by the use of a co-story teller. This works as a form of echo where the co-facilitator, the helper and the regular members of the group, already experienced story tellers, have their story ready to announce. In the Seed Group, the first distinct echo was provided by the co-facilitator, Tony's

partner Hyone. In RC, two people termed helpers were called upon to tell about themselves after the facilitator. The helpers were two members of the RC community who had completed the introductory course before and were requested to assist the facilitator. This echo of repeating this narrative style was also repeated by regular members of the ongoing groups such as the Seed Group and WISE. In comparison, the Heal Yourself Workshop, did not have a co-facilitator or any other members who had completed a similar course or group although the echo could be heard in the publication of Louise Hay's book. This book already set the theme of self-discovery. The facilitator's lead and the echo supports the practice of telling about yourself and looking for answers. This sets the theme that there is something to be found through an inner search, the teller becomes the protagonist in the self-discovery story. The facilitator's lead then continues to encourage others to tell about themselves and announce what they may be looking for. The next stage encourages the process of empathy and imagination that begins to initiate the new comer into the group story telling.

The key story teller then coaxes the stories from others.

The round, is the technique used in this circle setting. It is dependent upon the circle setting as this permits everyone to be the listener and the teller. The introductory round at the beginning of each group is the initial contact with self disclosure. In the opening circle, the round is used to invite the others to give information about themselves. For example, the first meeting of the RC group (20/10/ 92) started with the request from the facilitator *"to go round and say a little about yourself, why are you here and your interest in this group"*. This introductory round of the RC group revealed the group members' ages, family and intimate relationships, work, beliefs and previous knowledge of therapy groups, thus making the beginnings of a shared social world. The field notes of my first attendance at a weekend Seed Group state, *"The circle was to engage in the initial round, to say your name, why you were here and what you expected from this weekend"*. The WISE Group's (29/10/ 92) introductory round is noted as *"Name and a little about where you are at the moment"*. The Heal Yourself Workshop started with the instruction *"to say a little about yourself and about any work you have done on*

yourselves previously". Hence the round sets both the precedent for telling about yourself and the structure of following the example from the leader. The RC and Louise Hay initial opening was a new start to a specified course. Hence this initial setting of information was important to set a sense of sharing. In the ongoing groups, Seed and WISE, the introductory round also served the function of identifying new and regular members. This purpose of sharing, vital to the process of story telling, also provided the means to identify membership in this story telling circle. Irrespective of the status of the opening, either the first of the course or to introduce a new session in the continuation of the group, the circle sets the frame of giving and receiving information in a prescribed format. The important aspects of this sharing of information are the nature of self disclosure, telling about yourself, setting your search and confirming the structure of the group.

Reflection: My turn in the introductory round

All these opening circles encountered a difficult aspect to my research participant role. I introduced myself and the aims of my research. Hence my story was immediately altered, I was not fully able to follow the lead of the facilitator. At all groups this introductory round was noted in field notes as a particularly awkward time. I had negotiated access into these groups with the facilitators of the WISE group and RC, Claudia and Martha, as discussed in Chapter Two. Claudia and Martha concluded that the best way forward with my entry into the group was to write a letter of introduction about my research aims. This would give other members time to consider my request and talk to me on the telephone beforehand in they wished. Between my forwarding the letters to the facilitators and the start of the group, both facilitators had decided not to give out the letters prior to the group but to bring the research project forward at this introductory stage.

I have discussed this in Chapter Two as a misunderstanding concerning use of the word "autobiography". The interpretation was that this involved my own story of self-discovery. It was in this introductory round that this misunderstanding was observed. During the first introductory round of the WISE group, one member of the group expressed that she was not happy with my role and did not want to be an object of study. This member did not return after this evening and I was left wondering if my research had been a factor in this decision. Martha, (RC) had given my letter of introduction out at the beginning of the group to read through briefly before the introductory round started. My entry into my field notes reveal that "I was very dismayed at Martha's description of my research. It appeared that my autobiographical role was indeed my own, the role of the group had been minimised to such an extent that I would not be able to use any information from the group". Her emphasis was upon the interviews after the group. Martha described how the interviews would be an evaluation of how the group had developed. In the negotiation of access I appeared to have created a research world open to many levels of interpretation. The stress I placed upon unstructured, "see what comes up",

research in order to develop a ethnographic starting position had created the possibility of being adapted to fit the different requirements of being a researcher and being a group member. The seed group presented a different arrangement, with the flexibility of membership. In retrospect I should have mentioned my research role at the beginning of each group, but I did not. It was much easier to present myself as just another member of the group. Hence, I actively minimised my research role or when I did discuss this role, the theme I prioritised was that of equality, we are all telling our stories, we are all involved in this research. My field notes mark the feeling of being a fraud. "Would I be here if it wasn't for my research?" It was difficult to bring together the research objective of being there and my own self-discovery. Therefore I entered into a multiple level of negotiating with myself "What am I doing?", "How much should I say?" "Do they know I write field notes?" The dominant conflict between these two aspects of myself, was "how much about the research should I reveal to them and how much should I reveal about them to the research". These dilemmas were brought forward at each introductory round. They were the result of presenting my story within two distinct and different sets of framing and social practice. Once the groups had started, my own self took over this anxiety. I entered the sessions as myself and responded as myself, my self-discovery story evolved. My research story only returned when I went home and wrote about what I and others had done in the groups.

As my experience progressed in living this new life of researcher and self-discovery participant, I became increasingly aware that this was my research project and that any attempt I made at equalising our differing roles was thwarted by the constant presence of my research story, that I wrote. I could not hope to meet the number of demands that such idealistic objectives set. My unstructured, open, joint participation approach became more secretive finally accumulating in presenting myself in a very journalistic fashion to the weekend workshop of LH. I went along to the Heal Yourself Workshop without discussing access to research with the facilitator. I stated categorically in the introductory round my research interest and that I would be using what I found from this group in my work. Everyone responded positively. This felt marvellous and a stark contrast to the discomfort of collusion with the facilitators in the other two groups and the hidden role I appeared to take in the Seed Group. From this reflection the complications of being there are always under negotiation, the research role was always present with my participation role. However, being there also includes the here and now. While a member of the groups, at that moment in time, I was a member, I experienced the feelings and emotions of my life. It was only when I moved away, that the research identity was engaged again.

To conclude this section, the introductory round is central for the story telling to encourage the next stage of emotional self disclosure. The introductory round performs the initiation of bringing yourself into language, where such conflicts of why you are there and what you are doing may come forward. This next shifts onto a different level. As shown in the theoretical examination of the groups, in Chapter Three, the expression of emotions is regarded as the first contact with discovering this inner self. This emotional expression can be described as the

imagining, empathising, visualising strategy of story telling. The next level is to explain what this emotional expression has helped you understand, this is the announcing, articulating and vocalising strategy of story telling. These two levels of story telling are shown in the setting of the confessional.

The confessional.

This description of the confessional is taken from Foucault's later work (1986, 1988). Here Foucault develops his earlier theme of discipline and discourse to show how subjectivity is constructed and governed. The known subject, developed from increasing medical surveillance now becomes the knowing subject, where how the individual knows is shown to be under increasing self-surveillance through the growth of all the human sciences. It is through self surveillance and self confessing that the individual acquires subjectivity. This self surveillance and confession occurs in specific social practices. In *'The Care of the Self'* (1986), Foucault shows how Greek and Roman society prescribed specific practices to promote a regime of self awareness that promised an improved quality of life. Central to the use of the confessional is the evolution of the belief within discursive practices that this care of the self would reveal some hidden meaning. Foucault traces this development back to early Christianity.

"The Christian hermeneutics of self with its deciphering of inner thought implies that there is something hidden in ourselves and that we are always in a self illusion which hides the secret" (1988;46).

This self disclosure encouraged in the practice of Christianity, Foucault argues, is continued in the contemporary development of the human sciences. In tracing the genealogy of medicine and psychiatry the disciplines and discourses are shown to create a known subject, while the growth of the therapeutic world shows how a knowing subject is produced. Many studies have related this explanation to modern day practices of psychiatry, psychoanalysis and medicine and dentistry (Fox 1993). This is because these practices bring forward the individual for surveillance especially through the use of self disclosure. Therefore the forms of social practices identified relate specifically to the individual's subjectivity.

The application of Foucault's analysis of surveillance and governing the subjective is central in the understanding of alternative therapy. The Christian underpinning of self confessing to reveal a hidden truth, is linked with the eastern understanding of changing consciousness. This was highlighted in the stories told by the facilitators. The eastern belief of self as the godhead, expresses the possibility that discovery of this self enables the liberation from the social world, by elevating the individual level of awareness. The western psychoanalytical belief of liberating yourself from internal repression so that you can manage the social world in an improved way, is associated with this eastern promise to suggest you can be in the world but also take yourself beyond this social world. (Watts 1973). Through showing how this self disclosure is a process of subjectification Nikolas Rose (1989) discusses how this act of confession, revealing something inside, entails not only the constitution of a new self, but the very notion of self as well. Therefore the self-discovery story becomes a discourse of subjectivity, governed by the power, knowledge relations that frame the story and are practised in the groups. Here the constructionalist/essentialist debate identified in the self discovery stories told by the facilitators becomes the social science dilemma, of individual oppression versus liberation. By applying this concept of the confessional to the self disclosure shown in the groups the presentation of a private inner story is questioned.

The confessional in the groups.

I have used the concept of the confessional to illustrate how the facilitators encouraged the sharing of emotions in the groups. From observation and personal involvement, the groups were very successful in demonstrating how each person can experience this emotional feeling state. The first stage of the confession was the invitation to disclose this intimate part of yourself, the expression of emotions, such as anger, crying, laughing, moving, shouting. I describe two methods of initiating a feeling state, classified as non verbal and verbal techniques.

Non-verbal initiation into this feeling state was encouraged by the use of movement. Moving freely to music was a clear example. Other aspects involved exploring the space around you, for example by seeing how many ways you could

move along the floor. This form of free movement was more apparent in the Seed Group that had access to a large room. In the other groups this was approached with the movement being more restricted. Music was also used in the groups (except RC) to promote a sense of relaxation.

Verbal initiation was directly made by the use of questions. The main approach in RC is to initiate questions such as, "how do you feel at this moment?" "What is good about being a woman?" "How do you feel hurt by the class you were brought up in?" "What is your earliest sexual memory?" The questions were to tap into past memories and to release the pain and hurt again. The WISE group related the questions to the time of the year and what this particular period of time represented. The festival of Michaelmas was explained to the group by the facilitator as the time of change, so her question was directed to look at life events of change through out the year.

These methods of promoting self-disclosure were fundamental to the way that the framing of the story enters into the social practice. Each facilitator performs an important role in explaining the purpose of this emotional response. The introductory course to RC has a very specific method of teaching and demonstrating the emotional response. The RC theory explained the healing potential of emotions expressed as crying, shaking, yawning. These were demonstrated in "follow the leader" and "echo" techniques that I discussed in the introductory round. Hence emotional expression was mirrored for other participants to observe and try. This was referred to as emotional "discharge". The WISE and LH group specifically encouraged the use of drawing and imagination as a response to initiating questions. This drawing, visualisations and imagination technique to find and uncover inner emotions, was a common technique used by all the groups at times, to get the individual to enter this place of feelings and emotions. For example, during a visualisation a very specific guide was set, imagining yourself in a particular place, or taking on a specific role or talking to an inner part of yourself. Visualisation is a form of guided imagery and it can take the individual into a number of places where emotions are found, from imagining your perfect partner, to reliving a particular dream that the person has experienced. The key to the Seed Group is the symbol of the seed that promotes the image of a dormant place that can be awakened. Each

participant in the seed group takes turns in becoming a seed, to lie down on the floor and to discover what feelings come forward when this seed begins to unfold.

The framing of the story is then structured in definite social relations to listen and receive this self disclosure. The circle broke into many different figurations to create sharing on a one to one basis or in smaller groups. For example the method of working for the Seed Group was to break into small groups of 3-5 people which remained your small group for the weekend. The reformation of the circle from the opening was the coming together of the small groups. The RC group used a variety of one to one counselling, forming small groups and then coming together regularly into the circle. The WISE group and Heal Yourself workshop used more individual work through the techniques of visualisations, meditations and artwork to give a private hearing to this initial story. Whichever technique was used, from one to one counselling, drawing your feelings on paper, to being a seed, the objective was the same: to bring forward the individual's inner story through the experience of feelings and expression of emotions. This is the intimate component of self disclosure that is encouraged. These feelings and emotions are then shared, frequently in a pyramid fashion. All facilitators explain that this sharing is voluntary and that you are able to keep your inner story private, but throughout my participation I never observed any time where the story remained untold to others. Everyone continued to share this emotional expression with at least one other person. Firstly, this was unavoidable in the Seed Group and RC as their practices ensured a witness to this expression, the supporters in the seed group, the counsellor in the RC group. Even with the more private techniques of drawing and visualisations used in the WISE and LH group everyone went on to share what had happened with the person sitting beside them. This is how this inner expression becomes a story. The experience of feelings are announced, articulated and vocalised.

It is the structure of the social relations in the group, which provides the role of the listener and witness, that are vital in the concept of confession. Here I use Nikolas Rose's (1991) description of the confession to illustrate this interplay between bringing forward the private inner story and the surveillance that this expression is subjected to, from both the reflexivity of the individual confessing, and the role of the listener.

"In confessing, one is subjectified by another, for one confesses in the actual or imagined presence of a figure who prescribes the form of the confession, the words, the rituals through which it should be made, who appreciates, judges, consoles, or understands. But in confessing, one also constitutes oneself. In the act of speaking, through the obligation to produce words that are true to an inner reality, through the self examination that precedes and accompanies speech, one becomes a subject for oneself. Confession then is the diagram of a certain form of subjectification that binds us to the other at the very moment we affirm our identity. In this matrix of power and knowledge the modern self has been born; to grasp its workings is to go some way towards understanding the sort of human beings we are". (Rose 1991:240)

This matrix of constantly witnessing yourself is in the framing and the social practice of the self-discovery story. These self-discovery groups prescribe the affirmation of self-identity through the continuous reflection upon yourself and others. The prescription is given through the framing and social processes of this story telling. This exposure of intimacy is placed as a strategy to reveal an inner, true self. There are two important aspects of this confession of intimacy; the reconstruction of this intimacy into the authentic real, you and the act of self disclosure, which brings a distinct social relationship. To expand upon the relational setting of witness and listener, in this particular strategy of confessional story telling, I turn to the work of Elias that brings forward the expression of emotions not as a private feeling but a whole relational component. (1991).

Elias argues that the representation of emotions as a true self or of a person hidden inside is a limited understanding, as emotions cannot be taken away from the social setting in which they occur. Elias suggests that emotions indicate all humans to be constituted in the company of others. This constitution occurs through our interaction and the mutual shared understanding that this produces. The ability to recognise any sense of what is emotional, what is an inner sense, what is subjectivity, is gathered through our interaction and culture. The inner story would not exist without the outer reflection and consolidation. This strategy of confessional story telling must involve another. Once this intimacy is achieved with another it becomes the outer story. The retelling commences with further refinements, judgements and understandings made. The formation of your own story is how self-identity is constructed and this composition enters many levels of negotiation, within and without, the two can not be separated. It is through feelings brought about by the

imagining, visualisation and empathy processes in the groups, which encourage the self-discovery story to be announced, articulated and vocalised.

Sharing your confession, from the intimacy of yourself, to others and then to the group produces the confirmation of this self-discovery story. This enables the next stages of story telling where a community of support is identified and public problems shared. The confessional setting of drawing, talking to one other person, or sharing with a small group of four, all serve the purpose of developing intimacy and safety of disclosure. This break down and frequent bringing together back into the whole accelerates the intimacy of the group as a whole.

The self-discovery story becomes a shared story.

I will use some examples from the groups to demonstrate how this process works in detail.

Meeting of the WISE group 15/2/92, the Festival of Rebirth. The focus for the meeting on this occasion was to share our specific feelings on stages of womanhood that come forward at certain times of our lives, for example, sexuality, motherhood, fertility, menopause. The mix of women members in the group brought forward many different life stages that we were all facing in our present lives, from early experiences of mothering young children to becoming the mother of adults, from the beginning of relationships to the ending of relationships. All these differences were brought together under the understanding of womanhood. The experiences were shared by the symbol of being a woman. My expression of feelings, at this time, showed how I felt when starting again after a divorce. I used the images I drew to portray myself as a sexy, attractive, woman that accepted parts of my physical make up that used to worry me when I was younger. These feelings received an accepting audience in the group. I discussed these feelings in the public stage of the group to redefine myself as a woman possible of starting new relationships. I then listened to the feelings and different stages that the other members were experiencing. I identified with their feelings and their discussion of these feelings in relation to being a woman. I therefore began to broaden my reception of all the feelings discussed in the group.

Louise Hay Workshop 22/10/92. This is a clear example of how an individual exercise becomes a group story. Everyone in the group had a mirror in front of them. We all had to look into the mirror and repeat to ourselves "*I love myself exactly as I am*". Everyone in the group then shared the difficulties that this exercise produced. Through the sharing of these difficulties we gathered together how hard it is for all of us to be positive about ourselves. We were all able to identify each other's ease of thinking negative thoughts about ourselves, how difficult it was to engage contact with our reflections without criticising our appearance, looks, the way we were. Hence sharing this brought us all together in the collective identity of criticising ourselves and how we had all been taught to be critical from the outside world. Repetition of the exercise then sought to change this. Our re-narration of the feelings evoked by the exercise began to show how it was becoming easier to be positive about ourselves.

These illustrations of how individual experiences become shared and transformed into a group feeling present a simplistic description of this sharing and creation of a community of support. The same issues and methods of sharing the private confession with the other group members were observed and experienced in the other two groups, although here I wish to illustrate the complexity of looking at this shared story when the analytical matrix of power is engaged. There are differences that emerged between contrasting the formal structure of RC and the informal, indirect structure of the Seed Group, that present some interesting issues concerning the role of the facilitators.

In the RC group the matrix of power and knowledge that the confessional produces can be clearly observed. The RC facilitator is frequently referred to as the leader and the effects of leadership are clearly observed. The RC group uses the term "Taking Time" for individual space to express yourself in front of others. The facilitator frequently uses this "taking time" for herself to provide a model and has a clear role in leading the others into this "time". In one specific example, the RC weekend workshop was a meeting of all RC members in the local community and the numbers exceeded 40. Specific to the RC techniques was the use of individual confessions placed in front of the group as a whole. There was no buffer system of sharing in a pyramid style here, to provide the safety of disclosure. A common

practice at this weekend was for the leader to encourage one person to come forward in front of the whole group and confess something about their past. It was a very powerful technique that well practised members of RC were familiar with and the leader competent to control. The entry from the field notes reports: *"Sharing distress is very powerful, how is such distress shared in front of the group?"* Being brought to such pain, disclosing that source of pain, is achieved through the skill of the facilitator. All RC facilitators are trained in this technique of developing an intimate disclosure between the individual and the facilitator, with a large group bearing witness. During this moment of disclosure your safety is in the facilitator's control, from which she will guide the individual back into the group ending with a positive sense of release, of acceptance and of belonging. This controlling of "time" also illustrates the opposite result of rejection, when the expected response is not achieved. At the fundamentals class held on 22/11/92, my RC field notes relate the occasion when one member began to question the theoretical aspect of RC. The facilitator at this point sought to change this questioning into the expected response of self disclosure. She wanted to uncover the hidden feelings that were the cause of this question. Hence judgement was made concerning the *"real issue here"*. It is interesting to note that this example of rejection by both the participant and the facilitator ended with the participant not accepting the RC doctrine in his interview story. Another illustration of the leadership format, that the RC self-discovery story follows, was promoted by the way that the emotional "discharge" appeared to be taught. My field notes record my concern at what I had observed at the weekend meeting, 23/11/92. The similarities between the leaders "time" was striking. *"The same smile, the same laugh and shake, the seductive interaction of telling the group how much you feel for them"*.

The matrix of power and knowledge was observed in a more diffuse form in the confessional format of the Seed Group. Here there appeared to be more flexibility and no rules. Individuals were given space for their own discovery of emotions which was located in their control. There was no obvious leadership model for the witness of the self disclosure to take on. The person who was the seed could take as long as they liked and the other people in the group were encouraged to support. The Seed Group field notes 30/1/93, refer to individuals who were more

experienced and familiar at “becoming a seed” and expressing themselves in this way. A comment made at one weekend, “*you can slip in and out quicker*” described my observation that you learned to become more skilled at this process of being a seed. The lesson was that the more you did this work, the more you were able to reach inner depths, touch very strong emotions, express them, re-evaluate them, and then go and have a cup of tea. Therefore an informal judgement of experience and how you do it was made possible.

The analysis of the confessional demonstrates the complexity of subjectification. The nature of the facilitators’ self-discovery stories illustrated how the understanding of a social self becomes the antithesis of a belief in an essential inner part. However the exploration of the social practices of this self-discovery story demonstrates how the belief in an inner self becomes the governance of subjectivity. It prescribes a distinct notion of individuality removed from the social context. Thus therapeutic practices are argued to both be liberation as they encourage a sense of individuality and oppressive as they determine this sense of uniqueness. In Chapter Seven I explore this in detail and suggest that the stark dualism between liberation and oppression makes any detailed understanding of individuality an impossibility. Here I return to the production and consumption of stories shown through the creation of a community of listeners and a sharing of individual problems, which become identified with others. This is where the self-discovery story becomes a cohesive entity. It is the binding of the individual within this group matrix that acknowledges the necessity of social relations to construct any life stories. Observed in the groups was the importance of belonging, feeling a part of the group. This was the final result of the social processes engaged in the networking and telling of the self-discovery story in the groups.

Belonging.

There are many illustrations of the expression of belonging, warmth, trust, friendships, love and unity that I could bring forward from my field notes. Many of these illustrations I have noted at the closing of the group. The circle was repeated by all groups at the closing time, the objective being to share what had gone on before

and to talk about the future. This closing circle was essential for the change from telling the individual inner story in front of an audience and the formation of a cohesive group story. The closing confirmed that sharing had taken place and what had been learned. End rounds were used to share something that you had gained from the group. The sharing of this *"what happened to me"* brought forward the turn taking in telling and listening to the story that enabled the group to feel part of the same story. A *"yes, I feel that"* expression was used and often participants explicitly identified their feelings with those of another member. This promoted a feeling of group intimacy and cohesion. Frequent references in my field notes reported that at this stage:

"The group were beginning to feel very close. There was a lot more physical touching, leaning on each other, holding hands".

"The atmosphere was that of expressing warmth and ease at developing close relationships".

"Through this sharing, this level of intimacy the group begins to feel closer and closer, the women's group all ended with all of us clinging onto each other".

At the end of a weekend Seed Group one member said in a closing round that when the group came together again it would be like a *"family reunion"*. This particular poignant remark illustrates the strength of cohesion that could be shown in the closing circle.

This belonging and acceptance was also an important strategy of the facilitators. The cohesion of the group made for a successful group. This was particularly illustrated by the facilitators themselves belonging and participating in the groups, sharing about themselves. On the 8/12/92 the last group of the fundamentals RC class, Martha spent some time expressing her closeness to the group, giving the impression of a special cohesive group with many connections, very able and sensitive and very supportive towards her. This cohesion is a main part of the process of story telling. It was the creation of a community of support and creation a shared world where the individual stories can now constitute a unity and begin to play a part in defining this culture of the inner self-discovery. This highlights the importance of the social practice of story telling where the physical, tactile communication is acknowledged alongside the story told. Cohesion of the closing circle actively encouraged the presentation of togetherness through holding

hands, chanting and meditation upon a shared focus such as a candle in the middle of the group. The individual story and the wider story became blended in a new formation. These examples show how the story telling becomes a group story, which permits communication on many levels. The important level not acknowledged in the telling of stories was the actions of hugging, the holding hands, the physical comfort. At all times this expression of emotions acknowledges the relational component on many levels. In the confessional intimacy and belonging are shared not only through the telling, but through the ease of gaining physical contact. The retelling of the confessional story reveals what is discovered. In contrast to the spiritual theme of connection associated in the facilitators' stories, the strategies of story telling in the group situation identify a clear social relational aspect to this theme of connection. The inner self was made tangible not only through metaphors and definition but through the physical relations of warmth, touch, acceptance and belonging. I have chosen here to illustrate this by including some photographs taken at a Seed Group weekend. They tell the story of connection through intimacy and contact, reflecting the importance of connections illustrated in my discussion of networking. Here I suggest that it is the processes of story telling that enables such connections to flourish.

To conclude Chapter Four I highlight the three main social processes of the groups; networks, the strategies of story telling and the experience of belonging. It is these processes which encourage the development of a group identity towards the self-discovery stories and form a cohesive group. I now explore what the participants told in the interview setting therefore these stories were told after their involvement in the groups.

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Chapter five

How the story is consumed and reproduced by the participants.

In this chapter I look at the stories of the participants, told in the interview setting, to see how the self-discovery story reveals itself after their involvement in the three groups. The framing of the self-discovery story and its social practice from Chapters Three and Four identify how this inner self is taught in an experiential formula. This highlighted a difference between the social practice of sharing emotions and the spiritual theme of connection that the facilitators express. The participants' stories illustrate both these aspects. Many of their stories echo the facilitators' definitions of an inner self in contrast to an external social life. The motivation for joining the group reveals a search for some connection through two levels, via personal relationships, and through developing a more spiritual belief in connection with a life beyond the social milieu. Therefore a search to find some sense of self-identity has been engaged. In the thematic analysis of the content of the stories and the nature of the story, the story of salvation is not so apparent, although the limitations and repression of social life are clearly articulated.

It appears that the self-discovery stories were assimilated into the participants' everyday lives in two ways. Firstly a major and minor key to the story was heard. This is where the major key tells about a main focus in their lives, such as work, art, politics, religion, relationships. Alongside this main focus personal, emotional life events are shared. This minor key tells of problems in childhood, divorce, loneliness, parents, and links directly to the original motivation to join such groups, the sense that something was missing in their lives. From this format I concluded that the self-discovery story was successfully heard and integrated into this telling. The stories of some participants also revealed a career in self-discovery. The participants, who have attended many of these groups and work in similar areas, expressed a similar content to the facilitators. The success of the self-discovery story that was reflected in the participants stories is placed against two

stories where a very strong major key has not been changed. The two participants who expressed very strong beliefs in politics and religion demonstrated a conflict with the definition of an inner self, which the self-discovery story places as the most important thing in their lives. The differences between the participants and the facilitators and between the participants themselves all converge with a fundamental recognition that such therapeutic involvement does bring benefits. Here I use the statement from one story "the negatives turn to positives" to show how this encouragement of self awareness is perceived to bring a change for the better on a personal and social level.

Here I introduce the participants who were interviewed in detail. From the diagrams of the group members in Chapter Four, you will see that not all participants were interviewed. Despite this methodological dilemma of getting to all the group members, especially the ones who left and did not become regular attendees, the value of creating a free fall story telling interview style does allow an important conclusion concerning the way that the self-discovery story is integrated into the lives of those who did attend regularly and agree to be interviewed. Thus a new self-identity story is produced.

Reflection, the practicalities of creating an interview story.

How the stories were collected informs another important area for reflection upon the research process. In practical terms the RC group was the easiest collection. The 12 week course ended so I was able to develop immediate interview contact after the group. I was also at the beginning of the field work year. This is reflected in the length of the stories and the ease of contacting the participants who responded. The only members who I did not interview here were the co-helpers, who declined saying they were too busy at present, and one member who moved out of the country. Due to the geographical location of the Seed Group and the diverse locations of participants, the collection was not so easy. After three interviews in participants' homes, I decided to try and incorporate my attendance at the group with the interview. This meant that I had a different type of collection. It did indeed provide peoples' stories but with a very different setting, I had not created space away from the group. The focus was more directly upon the group, the time spent was shorter and the ease of allowing the interview to develop was not so possible. The WISE interviews also reflected the problems of travelling to their homes and arranging a convenient time. After the year of meeting as a group had finished, my energy for field work was dwindling. This is reflected in my ability to only reach three of the WISE women as by this time two women had left the country.

Another problem is that these stories are all from volunteer story tellers, who had stayed and been committed members to the group. I did not interview any person who rejected this group process of self-discovery. The Seed Group and the WISE group all had people who only attended once, but I did not gain access to talk to them. These qualitative dilemmas of accessing people who do not want to tell their story are always present. Social research frequently depends upon the eager story teller to enter the research world. However, while this is acknowledged, I feel that the problem has shifted to a particular strength. How can sociologists impose themselves upon unwilling respondents? There must always be a certain investment for people to give their time. I felt that the strength of the investment from those interviewed was because of their friendship with me, a loyalty and keenness to support my work was apparent. I did not have such a strong relationship, developed from the groups, with those I did not interview. The strength of this investment in a friendship was to enable the free-fall story telling, so that irrespective of the differences between the collection of stories from the participants, the differences and similarities in the way that the story is told continues to explore the various levels of the self-discovery story.

The Participants' stories.

The Seed Group.

Lesley was a 42 year old woman, recently divorced and setting up a new home with her two teenage daughters and new partner James. She lived in a town in the commuter belt of the Thames Valley. She worked as a welfare assistant with children who have special needs. She had completed an Open University degree. She was a house owner, although since her separation from her husband, Lesley had experienced a change in her life style with increasing financial worries. Lesley described how the recognition of tension and unhappiness in her marriage brought her to begin Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, and Dream work, eventually meeting Tony at a local centre for human potential. Subsequently she then became involved with the Seed Group. Lesley felt she has changed from her attendance and is trying to develop a new life.

James was a 22 year old graduate. James is a son of the facilitator, Tony. James had always felt that he did not "fit in" and he was looking for a group to meet like minded people and to understand the way he related. Since his attendance at the group he had just started his own sales business with the nutritional product

that was introduced to him by Frances, another member. He had moved into the house with Lesley.

Arthur was 52 years old, divorced with two daughters in their twenties. He was married for 22 years and has experienced the last two years of separation as a drastic change in his life. He lived in his own house in a town in the SW. He sometimes shared this house with a lodger. Arthur had taught for many years and now wishes to change his occupation. He was involved in amateur dramatics and drama has always been an important part of his life. Arthur contacted the facilitator for some individual sessions to understand his dreams and how they related to the breakdown of his marriage and starting his new life. Tony then introduced him to the Seed Group.

Clio was 35 and lived in a local town about 10 miles away from the centre. She lived on her own after the recent breakdown of her relationship. She had two teenage children. Clio is an artist. She contacted the facilitator after she had experienced a number of disturbing dreams that she wanted to understand. Tony then recommended the Seed Group to her.

Debbie was 19 and lived in rented accommodation near to the centre, she was a frequent visitor. She felt that the group would help her overcome some of her problems with relating and expressing herself. Debbie had engaged a number of jobs and had recently applied to work in alternative therapy groups at a Greek holiday centre, through her contact with the facilitator, Tony.

Frances was 29 years old and a sales representative in nutrition. She lived with her mother. Frances' work involved the organisation of meetings and the recruitment of sales people in the presentation of this nutritional product. This brought her into contact with many alternative networks. Through this involvement Frances felt that she wanted to understand more about herself and understand the way she related. She had also been attending a group that promotes self discovery

through techniques developed by the culture of the North American Indian. Frances met the facilitator in London at another group and became interested in his work.

Steven was 25 and lived in a city in the Thames Valley. He was a friend of Frances and attended the group once as he thought it would be interesting and good to meet people. He lived in rented accommodation and worked in an office in a clerical capacity.

The RC class.

All the members agreed to be interviewed apart from the two helpers, Andy and Laura, who did not respond. It also proved difficult to arrange a mutual time with Paul as he left the country soon after the group ended. So the volunteer story tellers were:

Anton was 27, an ex medical student who had recently returned to England after doing voluntary work in India. He lived in the city in a shared rented house. He returned to this city as he had lived here previously. He was unemployed and was doing voluntary support teaching for children with special needs. Anton was on his own and had not had any long lasting intimate relationships. He was in contact with his mother and that appeared to be his only family relationship. Anton hoped to return to do some sort of voluntary work abroad. He had a strong Christian background and this religious component was very important in his life. His childhood was characterised by living abroad for long periods. He applied to the course through an advertisement published in an alternative events paper that focuses upon environmental and health groups. Anton felt that the course would increase his social contacts, help his feeling of loneliness and enable him to look at his relationships, where he felt that he always ends up as the listener.

Dawn was 25 and lived with her partner in a rented flat in the city. She had been in this relationship for many years and sees this as a very secure part of her life. She worked as a teacher of pre-school children after completing a training course. Dawn described herself as an artist and was always creating different things

for sale on a market stall. Dawn hoped to start Art college. Dawn's mother and father lived in a village nearby. She came to the group with her friend Mary as she felt that she would like to know more about what she was doing with her life.

Mary was 26 and lives in shared rented accommodation in the city. Mary completed a degree in politics and had wondered what to do since then. She has travelled and returned to live in the city as she still had friends here and her family lived nearby. Mary had a close relationship with her family, who she visited regularly. Mary did not have a relationship at this time and saw the exploration of her sexuality as very prominent in her life. Mary described herself as a socialist and feminist and her politics were very important to her. Mary responded to the advertisement for the class in the same events paper Anton used. She also encouraged her friends Dawn and Paul to attend. Mary saw the group as helping to explore parts of herself, her individuality and creativity, in a way her involvement with politics had not permitted.

Wendy was 27 and lived in shared rented accommodation in the city. She was doing voluntary work in the mental health field. After leaving school and experiencing the death of her father and mother, she described herself as becoming withdrawn and depressed. A GP referred Wendy to a therapeutic community and since her involvement there, she has continued to enter a variety of therapy groups in the alternative health setting. She felt that this has helped her gain an understanding of herself and a sense of belonging. Wendy went to the Findhorn community (a residential centre for many groups found in the alternative health field, discussed in Chapter Six) and during her experiential week she was introduced to an understanding of a higher self. Subsequently, Wendy felt she was following a path of alternative practices to contact this sense of a higher self. Wendy had a sister, who lived in a village nearby, and a brother, who lived in London. She was recommended to join the co-counselling group by a friend who said this would be a safe place for her to express her emotions. Wendy was aware of how the group may operate and knew that the techniques would help her feel she belonged and meet people in a genuine way.

Dave was 34 and lived with his partner and her child in rented accommodation in the city. Dave was unemployed after leaving his work in local radio due to becoming depressed. He had recently separated from a previous long term relationship and still had the home where they used to live together. Dave had always been involved in playing music. He completed a business studies course, recommended by his father, but has always felt his heart is in the area of music. Dave had always lived in this locality and had many friends and family living in nearby villages. Dave saw the group as helping to understand his past relationships. The class was recommended to him by his present partner who was a member of the co-counselling network and a close friend of the facilitator.

Nina was 35 and lived in a rented house with her partner in a village outside the city. Her partner Chris also attended the group. Nina was a midwifery student at a hospital in the city. This would be her second degree. She had worked in a number of jobs and was involved in the peace movement. Her political concern was connected to her childhood being spent in Northern Ireland. She originally started co-counselling when a friend recommended it to her as a support, to help Nina through the "burnout" she experienced after her involvement in peace work. This class was her second contact with the RC network and she saw it as a refresher course to link her back into a supportive system, which would help her present training course. Chris was also interviewed but I have placed his interview with the facilitators as he spent most of his time telling about the development of his work.

WISE.

All members of the group agreed to be interviewed initially but this proved difficult as Bernice and Suzie left the group before it ended to move to live in another country. Joy lived a long distance from where the group was held and the interview proved difficult to arrange.

Katja was 48 and a Yoga teacher. She had two grown up children and lived in a large house situated in a village, with her husband. Katja is Swedish but she

had lived in this country for the 22 years of her marriage. Katja had known Claudia the facilitator for some years and admired her work.

Celia was 47 and had three grown up children. She lived with her husband in a large house in a village. She had engaged in a number of alternative groups, yoga, meditation, transpersonal psychology. Celia, like Katja, is a friend of Claudia's and she also worked as an acupuncturist.

Margaret was 44 and lived with her second husband in a house in a village. The accident of her first husband and other painful life events had recently been highlighted through the recent loss of her cat, of whom she was very fond. Margaret works in an office full-time. Margaret met Claudia when responding to an advertisement for treatment by acupuncture.

Defining an Inner Self.

The theme of connection.

The theme of connection, central to the facilitators' stories is compared to the theme of connection expressed in the participants' stories. With the participants I started each interview with the negotiated question: "*What brought you to this group*". All the participants agreed that this was the place to start. This starting point of the story revealed a motivation or awareness of a need for a social connection or a more vague expression of something missing. From the members of the RC group, Mary identified a feeling of something missing from her political life, Dave expressed this missing arising from the way people related. Dave also identified a need for help and to understand and release some of his past. Dawn identified a stage in her life where she didn't know where she fitted in or where she was going. Anton identified a feeling of loneliness and a need for social contacts. Wendy identified a feeling of being lost in the world and of not belonging. Nina

identified her original contact as the need for help after burnout at work and a need for support to balance her life.

Similar responses were given from the Seed Group members. James' response was in term of wanting to meet similar people "of like minds". Lesley's reasons arose from the recognition and work she tried to do to understand her unhappiness. Arthur and Clio were both seeing the facilitator on an individual basis which was primarily sought to help them understand the breakdown of their relationships. These individual sessions were progressed to attend the group. Debbie thought it would "help". Frances was interested by meeting the facilitator in another context. Steven came along on Frances' recommendation as he thought it would be fun. In the WISE group, Katja expressed her need for time to reflect, time for herself. Celia felt she was coming to terms with having a physical illness through a spiritual search. Margaret saw it as time away from the demands of her husband and work.

The needs and feelings expressed in answer to the question of why they joined the group, can be categorised as a sense of something missing: missing social contact, missing an understanding of their lives, missing a connection. The stories that follow are an assembly of narratives that describe how they engage in the search to understand this sense of missing. The life events told in the story follow the same format of presenting how an inner self has been found and what benefits this discovery has made. The way that this inner self was defined presented a descriptive style very similar to the facilitators' stories. I have taken these quotations from the stories of the participants and placed them in a table to show how this inner self is distinguished. This method of contrasting an inner sense of self with social expectations, falseness, and emotional repression, echoes the facilitators' mode of defining an inner self. Distinct from the facilitators' stories, where the story of salvation represents their career, their work and way of life, the participants' stories reveal many different levels through this definition. The participants do not develop the metaphor of a journey or path relating to their self-discovery. The nature of the story centres on the search for what is missing.

The first level I discuss is how this definition is related to experience in the self-discovery story. From the stories I recognised that the style of the experienced

participants, those members who had attended the group or similar groups for a length of time, differed from those who are just coming to express this sense of inner self from their first involvement in this sort of group. I suggest that this recognition in different styles reveals the distinction between the social and spiritual theme of connection.

	A sense of inner self	Contrast with a social self
<u>Debbie</u>	<i>There is a me inside...</i>	<i>that finds it hard to come out and show myself.</i>
<u>Arthur</u>	<i>Something essential I guess, knowing what I want.</i>	<i>I've always lived a life that was expected of me. Being a father having a good job.</i>
<u>Lesley</u>	<i>A wise knowing inside of me, the liberation to be me.</i>	<i>Living a life that was always pushing down the emotions.</i>
<u>James</u>	<i>It's like touching raw life, the realness</i>	<i>Away from the everyday worries, the fear of being different.</i>
<u>Frances</u>	<i>I'm beginning to really see myself</i>	<i>There are always people who think they know what I should do and who I should be.</i>
<u>Clio</u>	<i>It is being more sure of myself, in my work and in my feelings.</i>	<i>Questioning myself all the time worrying about what others expect.</i>
<u>Dawn</u>	<i>Finding my feeling self, my inner creativity,</i>	<i>my thinking self, which squashes down my emotions.</i>
<u>Dave</u>	<i>Returning to my original self</i>	<i>that has been eroded over the years.</i>
<u>Mary</u>	<i>There is a core something, something that exist at the very beginning.</i>	<i>All the bits of you are put together, like this should be here and that there.</i>
<u>Nina</u>	<i>A deeper self knowing what is right</i>	<i>Not being caught up in all the power games.</i>
<u>Wendy</u>	<i>A higher self, a greater consciousness, recognising a purpose in life.</i>	<i>...the world becomes meaningless...</i>
<u>Margaret</u>	<i>Me, definitely a part of me that feels</i>	<i>These feelings that people hide from.</i>
<u>Katja</u>	<i>The ability to shine within and be at peace...</i>	<i>when all around you is in turmoil.</i>
<u>Celia</u>	<i>A very deep centre, that is a resource, the truth of life.</i>	<i>Competition, aggression, that is so unnecessary. The false values.</i>

The co-counselling group had been the first experience with this contact for Dawn, Mary and Dave of distinguishing this inner self. In the Seed group and

WISE it was Arthur's and Margaret's first contact of talking about themselves in a group situation. In their story-telling the search for something that is missing was clearly identified as something that had occurred to the expression of their own individuality. This missing occurred because of the way that social living has "squashed" (Dawn) "eroded" (Dave) and "not allowed to evolve" (Mary), "burdened" (Arthur) and "hidden" (Margaret) their individuality. From this, the content of their story continues to show how the restoration of this individuality, this expression, renews lost hopes and dreams and enables them to explore parts of themselves not yet discovered:

"An individual that fits into the whole that's the part that is squashed out of you by society. You have all these social restraints pushed onto you. That is why I wasn't happy about this teacher role certainly within the state system. It is so fucking rigid and you are in the possibility of damaging whole generations of children, which panics me a little. That's why it's even more important to know yourself, how can you ever help anyone else if you don't know yourself?" Dawn

"I think it is the way I think, and the way I feel myself, I feel very me, but then that has all been made up by the social, even my feminism is myself, it has all come from other people. There is always this core of you, something at the very beginning, I think it is the saddest thing that we are not allowed to evolve our individuality and are expected to become non thinking non questioning. So self is about questioning, not accepting conventions. I am still doing that questioning my sexuality." Mary.

"I haven't understood the things that have happened to me. I have put them on one side and tried to carry on. The majority of people do not understand life, it becomes very superficial, like it did for me. I didn't know that I had to look for myself, I didn't know I had lost me. Now it is a thrill to bring back the things that you are, to uncover the right things to do". Dave.

"I don't think I was able to talk before. It's the conventionality of life that everybody feels they have to live it in a certain way, the done things for years and years and the systems we live by and the rules." Arthur.

"I was always taught to hide my feelings that I was too emotional, too childish, I should be more grown up. In the group I can be me and not worry." Margaret.

The theme that social life is oppressive and bad for your health is clearly heard against the hope for a recovery of individuality. If this message is gained primarily from their first contact with the groups is obviously questionable. I am not aware of the participants many other life stories. It is interesting to note that these five members do not have a background in the human sciences, they have not been

involved in a psychoanalytic frame before, the story becomes their way of creating their own understanding of social life and where they want to locate themselves. Therefore I conclude that from this original recognition of something missing, the groups have given them a story to reclaim these parts that they feel are missing and produce a new sense of self identity. The influence of the groups is clearly heard when Mary, Dawn and Dave, clearly repeat terms directly taken from the class. All three refer to "patterns", the co-counselling term to describe a set of behaviours that respond without reflection or adaptation to the situation. For example, telling your children off may be a pattern learned in your childhood. The concept of being "completely responsible" for everything that happens to you has been accepted and used to understand why each person can change. Arthur used the term "process" that I observed frequently in the Seed Group. The expression of "trusting the process" described acknowledging your own interpretation of emotions and feelings that emerged in the groups.

In contrast to these stories, the stories of Wendy and Nina in RC, Katja and Celia in WISE, clearly demonstrate this theme of connection through a more spiritual expression. This spiritual recognition reveals that they have had a wider contact with the framing of the self-discovery story. The influences of Jung and Buddhism are clearly identifiable. Their recognition of this inner self, which Wendy terms the "higher self" and Nina her "deeper self", immediately connects with this idea of a collective self. Nina tells how this is linked with her present training in midwifery:

"There are lots of levels, one is political wanting to change things, but there is also an archetypal, spiritual level. I feel that women and men do have their own cultures, birth for women is a rite of passage, it is a way of coming more into yourself. It gives me a sense of not having to fight life, I can work with it. Birthing repeats life and I am as comfortable with dying as I am with birthing."

Wendy describes a belief in her higher self as something that helps her put her life into perspective:

"...sometimes I feel so impotent, I watch the news and feel so angry, what can I do? I need to feel reassured that there is some greater consciousness. I believe we have four levels, the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual. Mental is the logic, the reasoning, emotional is the intuitive the feminine and spiritual is the feeling the experience."

Wendy explains how these four levels were clarified during her stay at Findhorn and this now reassures her that the pain and suffering in the world is for a purpose

as there is more to life than just living and dying. This feeling is also expressed by Nina who describes her belief in the spirituality in nature. This example of Wendy's and Nina's spiritual theme is not gained from the RC group, suggesting that the more experienced you are with other alternative social practices (illustrated more clearly in Chapter Six) the more likely your story contains a very spiritual and complex definition of this inner self. Wendy describes this association of practices well:

"I went to a spiritual community for two weeks, Findhorn, soon after I left the therapeutic community. That experience awakened me, meditating, talking about the higher self..... Then a couple of psychic fairs in London, I had a tarot reading all the New Age things that they do.I went to this dream workshop with this American Indian woman, she healed herself by focusing upon the forces of belief in the American Indian. You can use your dream time to focus upon these unconscious forces. I did all these things on my own and really enjoyed seeing all these people enhance their lives. The I joined a women's group, with meditations, stories, sharing, our connection with nature, ... Then I got my birth chart done....."

The life and death theme expressed in the stories of Celia and Katja are linked directly to their contact with Yoga.

"Life and death concern me a great deal, it always has, through my yoga teachings and now my work in acupuncture. I am at another cross-roads in my life. I have always tried to choose the path that brings me closer to the truth inside, the peace and contentment I feel when I know my body and mind are in balance." Celia.

"Through yoga I have been able to experience a true sense of peace and it is not until we all experience this peace that change can happen. I have been lucky enough to experience a truer reality." Katja.

Frances describes how this recognition of something more to life has been an accumulation of experiences starting with her work in nutrition.

"I suppose it was a series of accidents really, I came across friends who were involved in this sort of thing and it was so good to be with real people and not function at a superficial level. In my nutritional work I now have a clear awareness of how we are what we eat, I have seen people transformed by just changing what they eat. Like when I go to an EST group, or at my Medicine Wheel group, it makes you feel different. You know there is more to life than worry, work and family problems".

Although Dawn has not participated in any other groups before, her story reveals more of the spiritual content as shown by Nina and Wendy. Her story also includes her ecological involvement, which also incorporates a message of spiritual connection. Her story suddenly shifts from the co-counselling tale of everybody

sorting themselves out to her dismissal of the *"human centric notion of living"*. It then follows that Dawn recognises the interconnections between all living things and the resources of the earth. *"Ultimately if people are self healing then they will bring about the healing of the earth. Sounds New Age but I do believe it"*.

The ability to define this inner self from the groups and involvement in other practises also seems to reflect the participant's relationship with the facilitator. This is especially clear in Lesley's story. Although her story was different in content from the stories of the Seed Group facilitators, it shared many of the same telling characteristics. The narrative structure of realisations, where the problem is recognised, examined, understood and changed, forms the main structuring of the narrative episodes. The content of the story supports this influence as Lesley makes frequent reference to the importance of the facilitator and what she has learnt from Tony. The main explanation of Lesley's *"liberation"* centres on being taught and on the relationship with the facilitator.

"I started to do Yoga because it had a crèche. I wasn't that keen on Yoga it was what everybody was doing, but I still did it. Having done that I found it very helpful but I was still aware of tensions. My friend died and I had heard of Transcendental Meditation, I thought people would think I was absolutely nuts, I ended up taking four friends along with me. That was absolutely amazing , amazing results, so I became more interested in the feeling that there were other things. I then heard of a friend who was working with dreams in a group of about six people. I then started with this person who started another group that was running for ten weeks... It was all a bit temporary, he went away. Then there was something going on at a centre for groups near us.. I can't remember how I heard about it but I dragged my friend along. The dream groups only happened about once or twice a year but there was the Seed group. I was frightened of the Seed group it sounded like something I didn't understand. Even in the dream group I would think what am I doing here? I haven't got any problems. Everyone else seemed to have big problems and I didn't, but I still wanted to go on with it. I think it was the idea that I pushed things down, I wasn't sure what it was, but .. so anyway I had got so much out of the dreams and I had grown to trust Tony so much, I decided that anything he did must be safe. So I went along. In almost the first group I went to with Tony, he said that you could feel anything, you didn't have to feel guilty and that gave me permission to feel, you cannot help your feelings and that is all right, it is not wrong to feel. You shouldn't be jealous, you shouldn't feel it, you should be nice, it gives you permission to feel. Definitely made a change in me. He has certainly made an enormous difference to my life because of the way he has taught me, his patienceit isn't just the relationship on an individual level it is the way that he is and you are, he sees you where you are and knows you can only accept so much and it is to do with the acceptance of people that that is where people are. In a way

it is a relationship but it is also something slightly different. I could trust him in a detached way because that is how he is with everyone." Lesley.

Celia and Katja also have had a close relationship with the facilitator over many years, reflected in their sharing of Buddhist, Jungian, Yoga and Chinese medicine beliefs. As illustrated in the diagrams of connections within the groups in Chapter Four, the facilitators remain the central source of contact and connection to the members of the groups and to the knowledge that informs the group. However, this ability to define this inner self, especially using the same format of contrasting this inner self with the social, leaves me as a puzzled listener. I could understand the more public presentation of the facilitators' stories, they were used to presenting their story through their work, but why did this similar format also occur with the participants? I had been involved with the confessional stage of intimacy and self disclosure. I knew a great deal about the participants' personal lives. To explore why this personal emotional content remains a stepping stone in the story, like the facilitators, I have used the analytical concepts of major and minor key to show how the story is presented with a main focus that shows the assimilation of this self-discovery story into their everyday lives.

In each story I have identified a main focus, the major key, this presents each person's dominant way of informing about themselves in this setting. The content of this major key was shown as a main concern of their lives: their work, relationships or specific belief in politics as in Mary's story, or Christianity in Anton's story. Alongside this major key is another component of the story, also illustrated by the facilitators. Each story does contain personal details but this is not used to focus the story at any great length. It is not used to present the story as a cohesive whole. These aspects of personal life events brought forward in the story I call the minor key. I will show how these major and minor keys interrelate.

Major and Minor Keys

Mary's major key was her political identity. As she shows in her immediate reasoning for joining the group, politics are a vital part of her life that were not fulfilling her in some way. Mary describes herself as a crusader wanting to initiate change to improve the world. Mary found that she could accept the co-counselling

group because it connected with this aim. The written material that accompanies the class makes very explicit reference to promoting social change through individual change. Mary sees the co-counselling theory as Marxist. The development of this identity Mary confirms by telling how her mother is a feminist.

"My mum has always called herself a feminist. I can remember being about 16 and being in a women's group, I remember feeling Yes I am not crazy, I am not mad, there are women putting down very articulately the facts that I was feeling. It was like an explosion of self knowledge, it was me relating to it completely and getting confidence from it, not feeling like a complete freak all my life. I was a tom boy, all the double standards, the hypocrisy, bull shit, all the young people growing up with this".

From this Mary shows how this major understanding in her life has helped her to come to terms with who she is and provides her with a way of making sense of her feelings. It is this questioning of society, the way it is run and the conventions that it forms, that then highlights Mary's minor key. She describes how her closeness to women, and her identification with a feeling of sisterhood, have brought her to look at her bisexuality and the need to have a relationship. Within this minor key Mary talks about her individuality. This individuality involves the ability to explore her sexuality and her creativity in which she sees herself as a poet and writer.

"There are so many things I want to explore about myself, I want to explore the creative side of myself, I want to write".

Anton's major key identifies his main identity in his spiritual pursuits in the Christian tradition. His story was told in great detail, what books he has read, which teachers have influenced him, where he has studied. The major key of spiritual teachings caused a great conflict for Anton, as it was this spiritual search that frequently presented a moral dilemma with his need for an intimate relationship. He describes his difficulty in reconciling his sexuality with friendships and relationships. From his spiritual readings he was aware of a generalised moral conflict that has existed throughout history between what Anton terms the body and the spirit.

"When I am at my most cynical we are biological animals, where talking replaces grooming and all of this spiritual prayer, churches, is a pretext for being social with each other. The only reason we do it at all is to satisfy our basic needs. At my most religious I can not love at all, or love to such an extent I'm prepared to give up that person".

The minor key of relationships was constantly referred to throughout the story in relation to this main focus of the Christian doctrine. Anton went to the group acknowledging his need for social contacts and became attracted to another member of the group. The practice of co-counselling explicitly discouraged developing relationships within this network. Therefore Anton's conflict was highlighted and his story remained a sad story of looking, but not finding the positive encouragement he required.

"It came out last Friday, that if we wanted to be together that I should leave the RC community. We have such a lot in common, very close, I feel dis-spirited, dull generally, I have now written to ask if we are going to continue the relationship."

Dave's major key centred on relating. He described how he understands life from the problems we all have with communicating.

"I'm a great believer that human beings cannot talk, that is the big problem in relationships, we can't talk in work and every where else" Therefore Dave's telling of relationships became his story of what was wrong with society. Without honest and open communication Dave feels that life becomes very superficial and that every one just responds to the social roles and expectations instead of following their hopes and dreams.

"Yes it's society making ourselves ill, miserable and unhappy, we have taken on doing things because it is much easier not to talk to each other... there is only one thing that happens when you do not talk, nothing".

Dave's minor key reflected how his loss of communicating had resulted in him being unable to follow his own hopes of being a musician and he describes this as his erosion of his "original self". Dave continued to describe his life as falling into the same trap as everyone else, of trying to work and relate on a level that somehow lost himself.

Dawn's major key in many ways echoed the concerns expressed by Dave. She stated very categorically that she does not believe in society. Society was described as something that squashes the individuality out of the person, the main cause being the social restraints that are placed on the individual. She perceived the general level of communication in the social setting as chit-chat. In the same way Dawn linked this destruction of the individual with what she saw in her work with young

children, and her frustrated ambition to be an artist is expressed as a social problem,

"Art is such a birth right is stolen away from you as a child. Art is so completely individual it is about you".

Her minor key was very hard to hear against this concern for the world. Like Dave she did not mention her own experience of relationships but told the story in a very generalised form. Dawn's main personal expression centred around her place at art college.

"I have always drawn, always made things and finally I have allowed myself to do it. All the way through my teacher training I was totally miserable, it was staring me in the face, now I have made this decision to go to art college it is coming home to myself, since the age of 12 this is what I have wanted to do".

Wendy's major key was heard as her involvement in the various therapy groups. It would therefore logically follow that Wendy's story, focused upon her needs to belong and how this had been achieved through therapy, would contain more of a personal tale. Here the major key became the story of the various therapies she had been part of and what they have shown her. The central component of this was the story learnt in Findhorn community. She relates her personal findings to the story of the higher self. Her continued involvement in circle dancing, dream workshops, women's group, which looks at nature and natural rhythms, her uses of medicine cards, tarot cards and a birth chart are all told as methods that kept her in touch with this intuitive and instinctive sense of a higher self. The minor key in lesser detail brought forward Wendy's need to place this new identity of herself in front of her family and friends.

"...my family are important they have been through everything with me but I don't want to do things just for them, but for me".

Wendy's minor key can be heard as coming to terms with the problems she has of entering adult life. She wished to have a sexual relationship, and to cope with employment.

"I've grown a lot, there are things in the future that I need to do, paid work, having a sexual relationship, there is a bit of a boulder on the path at the moment, but I will still keep walking forward, I have picked up the tools on the way to help me"

Nina's major key in her story was her work. This links together her beliefs about women, about nature, about birthing as a rite of passage into womanhood.

She presents this tale with a strong spiritual component. It is against this that she is able to tell her beliefs in the problems of society and the organisation of such structures such as medicine.

"I'm not willing to be a good little midwife and do what the doctor tells me, bringing it all upon myself is not just a sense of knowing myself as an individual self, but knowing as a woman from the women I hear that is what they want, tapping into a deeper sense of myself, the sort of collective self."

The minor key is Nina's belief in the importance of reflection. This forms her basis for constantly trying to understand herself. It is a central component of her course, her relationship with her partner and her writing in her journal. This reflection is described as a vital part of her life and the part that can bring balance into her life between all the various components.

"It flows between all the bits, the co-counselling, my journal, essays, and also my marriage, being married to someone who does RC and who is also a psychotherapist. It is very good to have someone who is comfortable with looking at themselves. It's as if we are on the same side to get to the truth, although the truth is always changing, rather than being defensive and uncomfortable and untrue. Things that I learn about myself, I can talk to him about and then I will write it down".

The story that Frances told formed a major key from the narratives that expressed her awareness of nutritional needs and how people in society do not realise the importance of eating well. It was through her work that she had been in contact with a number of other therapies. Frances' concern for nutrition and her work in sales becomes linked with her need to understand herself more. As mentioned in the previous quotation that illustrated the accumulation of self-discovery that frames her definition of an inner self, Frances had been to EST meetings, has attended a group concentrating on the North American medicine wheel and the Seed group. Frances told how this has brought her to look at herself in a different way. The minor key where her personal needs came forward in the narrative described how she is wanting a more permanent relationship.

"My parents got divorced when I was young, it's all right I get on with both of them, but I suppose I want a long term relationship. I don't seem to meet any one, I wonder what's wrong with me. I know there is nothing really, it is just so hard to meet someone you want to share your life with."

James told his major key through a view of society as limiting the individual. James described how we are all limited by time and social expectancies.

"You could live your whole life from birth to death without living, it is just an instant away. As soon as I see it. I recognise and it grabs hold of me. Like we are taught English, this is a language but it is not a learned one. It is powerful, as soon as someone talks to me in this language of life, I don't just hear it and understand it. It grabs hold of me, so it is really powerful. It is that which is important to me, the basis of life, that I want to share and live with people.... Society is designed not to keep you in touch with that part, not designed to be intimate, it's distracting from that all the time and all the time you have to try and not be distracted and be in contact with life. One of the biggest distracters of all is time, everyone is taught to be in a hurry and that distracts people from themselves. Time structure, we set things out to be done within certain time and that causes more stress. The whole thing is more powerful than people would ever believe. If only we could step out of time and see what is going on, it is destructive and distracts. There are all sorts of things that it does, constantly setting things up to fail".

He also felt that people all live in fear of doing anything different.

"We all want to stay unobserved in the crowd hence we become too afraid to do what we really want to".

James has always seen himself as not fitting into a conventional, expected social way of understanding. His minor key emerged as this feeling of not belonging and feelings of loneliness and wanting to meet people.

"I realised then how separate I was. I was on my own and I had to take responsibility for myself, I could not blame anyone else. I have always had that feeling that it was me on my own and throughout school I was always seen as being on my own by the other children and the teachers. I was always thought of as very individual. I have always met myself but now I want to meet other people in the same way".

Katja's story reflected the major and minor key format as her story centred around her involvement in Yoga that started when her children were young. Katja is now a trained yoga teacher and an organiser of the British Wheel of Yoga. The importance of Yoga in her life was expressed as the confirmation of her beliefs. She described herself with a strong belief in Buddhism although not explicitly a practising Buddhist. She described how the spiritual beliefs in yoga have influenced and balanced her life and helped her to keep healthy through the balance of mind and body. Katja's minor key remains very quiet. In her story of yoga, her children and husband are only mentioned in relation to this development.

"I started Yoga when the children were young for a bit of peace and quiet". "I'm fortunate as I have never had to worry financially, my husband has always worked,

this has given me time to explore. This has been my space away from the demands of family life."

Introduced into this minor key is the sad expression of missing her home land, her family and language. She returns home to Sweden for holidays and does not regret the decision to marry in this country but the feeling of loss remains. Again Yoga is seen as balancing this aspect of her life.

Celia's story began with the acknowledgement that she is always exploring life and looking for answers. She told about her previous involvement with the church and then her growing awareness of Buddhism from Yoga. She had attended many courses and workshops and has been involved with Jungian psychology and process psychology for many years. Her story was a way of describing this theoretical background into a major key that centred on issues of life and death. Celia saw herself at a particular "cross-road" in life where her present life, as she understood it, was ending. This is illustrated in the quotation (page 165) I presented in the discussion of a spiritual expression to defining the inner self. Celia told of how her needs were different now and how this has influenced a different relationship with her children and her husband. She admits that she has had a very comfortable life, but that her awareness of this has changed. As Celia presented this changing awareness in relation to understanding a greater importance of life a minor key was heard that mentioned how she had undergone a successful operation and chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer. The close relationship between this minor key and her major concern with a more spiritual awareness is used to describe how she is coming to terms with her failing health and changes in her life. Celia feels that the spiritual beliefs she has formed has helped her through this difficult time and now enable her to "*go on to uncover hidden depths*" in understanding the reasons for living and dying. She described life as a paradox where, life is very transient while at the same time precious. Life is very important while at the same time insignificant against the broader understanding of how everything is connected.

"This brush with death itself has been my penultimate experience in knowing myself. The realisation that from death all life springs. This sense of connection, everything is different. I'm not saying that I live this awareness 24 hours a day. I

still do all the everyday things like go to Sainsburys, but having this sense can never be taken away, it's actually my true nature".

A Shared Community.

I have identified this major/minor key format to consider why the story is presented, like the facilitators', without any great emotional personal detail. This feature, where personal emotional details were the stepping stone to the discovery made, in the facilitators' stories can be appreciated in terms of the story representing their work, their beliefs, their motivation to tell a definite message concerning the importance of self-discovery. It signals the public role of story telling that the role of facilitator incorporates and the progression of experience in developing this autobiographical style. All this reasoning puts forward some explanatory satisfaction. Yet, while the participants all told the importance of self-discovery for themselves in different ways, they also omitted any great emotional, personal detail. There are two explanations that possibly relate to this production: the need to keep the confessional secret and the process of story telling that produces a culture of public problems.

The secret confessional.

In Michael Rustin's work "The Good Society and the Inner World" (1991), he builds on Simmel's discussion that looked at forms of social organisation to maintain the function of secrecy. Rustin applies this model of social organisation to psychoanalysis, which shows how the freedom to divulge a hidden self is contained by the understanding of confidentiality. Rustin sees psychoanalysis as a specific form of social interaction. The purpose of this interaction is to understand individuality. The intimacy and exposure, shown in psychoanalysis, is combined in a formalised regulated pattern of interaction. Rustin argues that the development of this psychoanalytical world has set a cultural boundary where the professional

confidence of secrecy is an important device for regulating this interaction. The objective of understanding individuality is promised in the self-discovery groups alongside the statement of how to regain this individuality. The achievement of experiencing this sense of individuality is expressed in the participants' stories. Chapter Four demonstrates the strategies of story telling that regulate the interaction in this alternative psychotherapeutic method of self-discovery. In the self-discovery groups professional boundaries are blurred, but the role of the witness, which the group plays to itself, can be observed as a strategy to regulate the pattern of interaction. The members of the group become witness to very intimate disclosures. Then each member is enabled to reconstruct this emotional story into a sense of new understanding. A story is prepared for a more public, shared hearing, which does not contradict the culture of safety that the groups promote necessary for the use of the confessional strategy. This culture of secrecy, or of protecting the intimacy can also be described as an important aspect in the creation of a network of trust. This network of trust has been raised often when looking at the recommendations, introductions and contacts that the facilitators depend upon to develop their work. The participants also appear to need this feeling of connection that I looked at when I discussed the importance of belonging in the social processes of the groups. From this I suggest that the stories told by the participants reflect this identification of a shared community and that this is specifically expressed by the pronoun "we".

In the self-discovery story, the culture of shared problems becomes the sharing of benefits. The benefits of self-discovery are expressed as changes within individuals and a proposed change for society. From Rom Harre's work (1990), that has looked at narrative conventions in scientific discourse, I am able to focus upon the use of "we" in the production of the story. Harre suggests:

"The choice of we rather than "I" is a narrative convention which has the effect of a rhetorical distancing of the speaker from an overt self-reference to make the egocentricity of advice or knowledge or whatever it may be more palatable" (Harre 1990:85).

Harre also suggests that the use of "we" invites the listener to join and be more than an audience. This act of making the story less egocentric and more participatory is a good strategy to continue the shared character of the story. The following

examples from the participants' stories illustrate how the use of "we" as a prominent pronoun, changes the teller's own personal particular experience into a generalised shared understanding.

"it really helped me (the therapeutic community) I used it for what is was made for, we all need the space to be really real, like in RC , take the lid off the pressure cooker for a bit". Wendy.

"There isn't any end to it once you start, sometimes I think I wish I could go back to my unconsciousness I had in my marriage, not to know anything, not to feel responsible for all this pain I cause myself. No, once you are in it, we can't go back, we can't undo the awareness." Arthur.

"It's all very easy, very comfortable.. (talking about whether therapy makes people spend too much time worrying about themselves.) I want some answers, what do we do ? Accept it is not going to change? We can't stop trying, but I'm not going to let them win. I can't let these people be rulers and dictate how I am going to live my life." Mary.

"I haven't really, (talking about being unemployed for two and a half years) because I have been working on myself. If the only work you did was to make money and work for other people then we might as well be robots." Dave.

Telling the story in the interview reflected the last stages of the self-discovery story practised in the groups. The story had moved onto the retelling, with constant readjustment to see what had been learned. The content of the stories reflected the lessons of the groups, while at the same time, assimilating this into a main part of their lives. This use of "we" refers to a community, an audience that shares this understanding. Therefore each self-discovery story permits the continued exploration of each person's autobiography, from the confessional, the self examination and then the presentation. An important aspect of how this self-discovery story is presented is through the description of positive changes that the involvement in the groups has brought. This move to positive benefits creates a theme which can be shared on an individual level and social level.

The Creation of Public Benefits.

Here the self-discovery story reveals the possibility of transforming a story previously understood in relation to something else. In the words of Dave from the RC class, "the negatives change to positives". The recognition of a positive

personal change in their lives from looking at this experience of an inner self is described by all the participants. Episodes in the story describe emotions that were unhappy, depressing, lonely, that were changed into avenues of growth.

"So now when anything depressing happens I can see it as something to grow through, whereas before it was that the world was against me, I shouldn't have been born. Now, I feel if it's meant to be it will happen and life is easier". Wendy.

"I've suddenly come across things I've lost and I'm about to get them back, but better, negatives turn to positives, you feel it around your eyes, you become happier. I didn't know I had lost me, it is a thrill to bring back the things that you are, to uncover the right things to do"..... "Emotions came through that I hadn't had for a long time, but these emotions were so dampened through eroding my original self, it's like the difference between a glass of water and a glass of wine". Dave.

"It's been so useful to me, sometimes I feel silly hitting cushions or screaming, but it is a sort of catharsis, I'm not finished by any means, but it gives me the beginning. I have been able to piece the bits together that were me and becoming me. It's like always reinventing yourself.... It feels really empowering to realise why I do things". Clio.

"It's like growing, like bits that have been cut off, and bits that have stopped growing are looked at. You can grow again, 'I could try this' is now transformed to 'I could do that', I have a choice to be". Lesley.

Arthur says he now has the confidence to follow through changes he wishes to pursue at work and in his relationships. *"I remind myself that I have a choice".*

In addition the stories of Katja and Celia focus their explanation of benefits for themselves and others upon the growth that occurs from the spirituality of eastern teachings. Katja describes the benefits and changes in her from all the various groups and practices she has engaged in, especially Yoga. Katja tells how this has helped her see how other people live. This has given her a sense of belonging and her story spends a lot of time voicing her beliefs in connections:

"I suppose this is what I mean about common vision, people being real with each other, genuine. I am on a spiritual path, I had let go of religion many years ago when I was an angry teenager who went against all that, but it left me with nothing. Now I have found my spiritual path, I believe in the collective consciousness, I believe in reincarnation, that there is another plane of consciousness. I believe that I have a self that can transcend this world from the inside, inside where my guidance is".

Celia links a very similar description of this spiritual expression to the resource it gives her, she describes tapping into a deeper sense of herself. This

gives Celia the strength and confidence to hold onto her beliefs about life when trying to deal with the professionals in the NHS, *"to stand against the system"*. This deeper sense of herself is understood as a *"collective self"* where she is able to identify with her needs with a more collective and deeper level.

"Human beings have so much ability to do such wonderful things, to shine, if only we could all see the realness of life, it would remove all this unnecessary pain".

This distinction between benefits made on a social level and benefits described in spiritual terms both depend upon personal, emotional life events transforming into an experience that can become an area of growth. This recognition of personal change as growth and potential was a clear objective set by the groups. Consequently this form of story telling avoids any emotional detail of past events. It takes the lessons learnt from past events into the present and the future. It is this thematic use of the future, that interconnects any discussion of the "me" with what could happen for all of us, "we". This is expressed as the possibility of self empowerment evolving into social empowerment, and the Buddhist belief of interconnection, where individual change is automatically linked to others. Both descriptions demonstrate a clear understanding of change through the frame of western psychology and eastern philosophy. Depending upon the positioning of the participant in the social practices they have engaged, that is the experience of the participants that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the stories reflect different ways of how this knowledge is integrated and interpreted in order to make sense of change. As I identified earlier, some participants have more experience with the eastern self-discovery story, through yoga for instance than those participants who have just engaged in co-counselling. Through this assimilation the inner self is still proposed as a message of salvation, where the positive benefits become social benefits for everyone and echo the facilitators' proclamation of an improved world.

Reflection, myself in the interview

I had a close relationship with all the respondents here. In the groups we had revealed intimate stories about ourselves. We had all confessed to each other. Therefore was the need for further confession less of a priority? The interview took place in a different social practice, where the demand for such emotional disclosure was not explicit. Therefore the role of the interview and the social space that I created with the respondent cannot be ignored. Did I collude with this use of "we"? I was a member of the community of listeners and tellers in the self-discovery community. The example that follows also questions who exactly is this "you"? Is it me? Or is it you?

The interview with Dave took place at my home, he had been here before and I had visited his home for individual co-counselling sessions. We had shared a

great deal of personal information together. Then suddenly I was in the role of the interviewer with a tape recorder and microphone to symbolise the difference of this social practice. During my interview with Dave I asked him to explain his statement about understanding his past hurts that he had kept suppressed.

Max: Is it painful when you try to understand these things?

I felt I had asked Dave specifically and I felt that I had a close relationship to request such information. Dave immediately responded with "you".

Dave: "In some ways, but you can achieve from it, you can step out of the pain and not have it on your shoulders, it gives you the ability to feel healthier, like an injection in the arm, you come away feeling better, you feel you have had this ability to talk to someone and talk safely, and know that they have felt the same. That is something so rare in a relationship."

Why is this generalised description used here? I thought that my interview relationship with the respondents would contain the warmth and intimacy that was present in the groups, and that such a close relationship would bring forward the ease of self disclosure. In reflection I feel that such a relationship was present but because the story telling was set in such a different practice of the interview, the act of disclosure was reserved for the practice of the confessional. I certainly felt that the confessional, which involves a specific contract where you agree that this person will become emotional was a way of protecting myself. I did not want to explore the "you" in Dave's response, it was easier to accept it. I wondered if this was a gender dynamic as most of the content of our co-counselling had concerned relationships. Without the safety of the co-counselling format would we be in danger of being in another sort of relationship if the intimacy went to far? This thought particularly crossed my mind when Anton stated that he wanted to have a relationship with a woman who already had children. I qualified here, I had certainly got two of them. Therefore was it important for me to set the interview boundary by encouraging this move in the story from the particular to the generalised. In comparison, in my interviews with women the same experiences occurred. I knew them intimately, we sat at my home or their home, we shared problems about relationships. The same movement occurred, the story stayed with the description of personal and social benefits, the future hope for them as individuals and for others. To be perfectly candid here, I don't mind if I cut off their emotional details, I created this impersonalised self-discovery story, because what I find in the analysis of the transcripts is far more interesting.

Therefore from both these personal and social benefits the participants are presenting their sense of the world in general, through an understanding of themselves in detail. The therapy story here becomes the positive not only for the individual, but for society and the world. In this way the participants' stories show how they have achieved the goal of the self-discovery groups. The move of the story from the thematic level to the structural level is shown. The thematic level is the organisation and assembly of the knowledge that frames the story, the structural level is how these themes move to the identification of public problems. This discussion of levels between thematic and structural, is a complex sociolinguistic

debate, that I can not possibly give justice to here. I use the distinction made between these levels as developed in the analysis of folk tales. (Jackson 1990). One conclusion arrived at in developing analytical models of folk tales is the idea that certain universal actions are structured into the stories and it is this that makes the numerous thematic variations comprehensible. Thus individual life stories are shown against the general structure of the story and it is this generalised structure that reveals three universal elements within these life stories. These are; the goals, the action taken to achieve these goals, and the recognition or reflection of how these goals were achieved (or not) (Jackson 1990). The participants' stories show what they went to the groups for, how they have experienced these hopes through the discussion of change and how they recognise that this has occurred. Whereas the folk tale has a protagonist who goes off to achieve the task and how this achievement is helped or hindered by the presence of others, the self-discovery story has the protagonist in search of their individuality against the opponent of society. Very few episodes are related to the help given by the group and the facilitator.

Psychoanalysis has been argued to construct a specific autobiographical tale from a generalised biography (Bernstein 1990, Craib 1989, Elliot 1992). I conclude here that this alternative framing and social practice of the self-discovery groups produces another layer. The specific autobiographical tale is re-negotiated again into a wider context, the moral imperative for a better world. Here the construction of self-identity stories through the systematic organisation of reflexivity, becomes the sharing of a new belief system. This system can be argued to be religious or political. I find the difference minimal when the moral imperative is applied. Central to this shared belief system is individuality, making sense of yourself and of the world with a positive hope for the future. The story also exhibits a certain progressive system of belief, there appears to be a definite move from the social to the spiritual. As Giddens describes, the self-discovery story could be clearly related to the evolutionary nature of life politics in late modernity.

"A reflexively ordered narrative of self-identity provides the means of giving coherence to the finite life span, given changing external circumstances. Life politics from this perspective concerns debates and contestations deriving from the reflexive project of the self". (Giddens 1991 :215)

Therefore if the reflexive project is spiritual then the debates and contestations concern such issues.

An interesting contrast in this discussion of personal and social benefits can be drawn from the stories of Mary and Anton, who came to RC with very firm identity frames of politics and Christian spirituality respectively. It is this prior framing of the story that brought them into conflict with the new story they have heard in the therapy setting. Anton and Mary present the briefest explanation of any change and benefits directly brought about by the co-counselling.

"I suppose I am getting somewhere, I am starting to understand what I am doing in relationships which I suppose I find progress" Anton.

"I think it does help, I saw a change for everyone in the group, to legitimately talk about your problems" Mary.

These short recommendations for co-counselling pale into insignificance when Anton's and Mary's stories continue to highlight the main influences of change in their lives as their spiritual and political endeavours. Both Anton and Mary find the central formation of rules by a guru type figure also unacceptable. This leader image directly conflicts with their political and spiritual beliefs as the leaders of their own stories. The main content of their co-counselling tale is critical. Mary's criticisms comes from her politics. *"It is all too white and middle class"*. Mary also finds the rules of the group very restrictive. She cannot connect any positive social change with an organisation that seeks to regulate themselves so formally. Mary particularly highlights the rule of not forming relationships outside of the group as an unnecessary rule. Even though this rule does not affect her unduly, as she has friends already in the group that she can continue to relate to, she objects to the rule on the grounds of restricting others. It is from Mary's political story that her "me" becomes the hope for the "we" although at the same time she does acknowledge the need for every individual to understand themselves.

Anton's criticism centres on this rule of no relationships, other than the counselling relationship. This has brought Anton into direct conflict with the co-counselling network. Firstly, his main motivation for attending the group was to increase social contacts. He became attracted to a member of the group and this attraction was not permitted. Following this critical appraisal of his experience in co-counselling Anton's story of individual change and social change is told in direct reference to his spiritual beliefs. For Anton it is the practice of spirituality, that is

the recognition of the beauty and light within us all, that becomes the hope for all of us. He found himself unable to accept the "wacky" element he described as *"people get loose and woolly like I am god, you are god, we all are a bunch of bananas, saying everything is god doesn't tell you anything. I need a personal god I can talk to, truth within, light within, but a god within? I couldn't defend that belief"*

Anton uses this God he can talk to outside of himself, in the same way that the god within is used, to make some sense of the world and himself in it.

"I've got as far as deciding that there is beauty and there is life. The perception of beauty is in itself beautiful and the rest is from experience, when you accept suffering it is not so bad".

Mary and Anton do not appear to have needed a new story to make sense of the world, but what was missing from their lives was the understanding of intimate relationships. As with my conclusion in the previous chapter, my analysis of the processes of story telling does not reveal the concrete social relations that the group fosters, the physical warmth, touching and hugging that occurs, the sense of belonging that attending the group can give. It is obvious that Anton and Mary did not feel any such sense of belonging after their participation. Hence the concrete social relations had not taken precedence over the major key of their stories. Other stories continued to acknowledge the thematic expressions of connection, but the question arises as to why such a physical, concrete aspect of the self-discovery story remains more silent.

Belonging.

This self-discovery story is the autobiographical placement of life stories within new frames. These themes relate to social and spiritual experiences in an individualised form that contains the theory of connection for the future. The presentation of the self-discovery stories by the participants highlights the same paradox that was shown between the theory and practice of the groups. The stories do not place the group relationships alongside the discussion of a tangible inner self. My observations concluded that the warmth and closeness of the relationships within the group were essential to the confessional, the emotional expression and therefore essential to the experience of this inner self. The participants' stories have not focused upon this aspect, although during the story hints are made towards the importance of the group. James refers to this at the end of his hour long interview:

"There is one last thing about the healing potential about the seed group, I think people would get more from having a hug for an hour instead of talking for an hour. People are going to aromatherapy for the physical contact and the attention that massage gives".

Clio expresses her surprise at entering a new couple relationship in the group.

"I couldn't believe that there I was again, repeating the same old thing, I had come to understand me and men before I took on another, yet there I was falling in love. But that is the Seed group really, it opens you up to all these emotions".

Steven only attended the group for one weekend following the recommendation of Frances. He was interested in the group but was really unsure of why he came apart from wanting the social contact. He had heard that it was fun. Steven's story focuses upon this aspect of fun from the group and a nice way of meeting people although his story ends with the recognition of its value in another way.

"I came down with the idea that it would be good for me, but it was more. Just a simple method of expressing yourself, supporting other people and being able to show your feelings to them.....people were allowed to be people".

Margaret's story remains a very personal story, where the minor key is dominant. Margaret's story starts with the loss of a child in her first marriage. Since then she has been unable to have children. Margaret is now remarried, and she describes this relationship as problematic. Her husband sees her as neurotic, his lack of understanding is described as the main reason for needing to talk in the group. Margaret tells of how she has just lost her pet cat. This loss and her experience of grief reminds her of the loss of never having children. Margaret does not express any positive change, she feels she could have done a lot more with her life but has never found out what she could do. Margaret does not define a distinct sense of self, her understanding is placed within the search for being able to express herself safely. For Margaret it is her recognition of the importance of the group that becomes her positive statement.

"I look forward to the group. I feel I'm valued. I've got to know everyone and they listen to me without any pressure to be this or that. I feel it's safe, you can say what ever you like, I don't have to explain, no one judges. I feel accepted and loved, do you know what I mean?"

Debbie presents another aspect of this story. Debbie finds it difficult to put any of her feelings into words. She does not become a vocal story teller, but she describes

well how she has grown very close to certain members of the group, and this is very important to her. She says that when the group ends she can feel very lost.

"I love some people here, they mean a lot to me, I don't think they know that, we all go away at the end of the weekend. I love being hugged and held, I need this so much."

These hints on the value of intimacy and sense of belonging experienced in the groups are very important. They highlight how concrete social relations may be vital for the sharing of understanding, the acceptance of new beliefs, the ability to follow the processes of story telling, while remaining a part that is not so vocalised and announced. The social relations of the community of listeners here are very interwoven and connected and these crossings continue to emphasise how the "fusion of any horizon", the web of relations, the situated knowledge depend upon the people "being there".

From the retelling of the participants' stories I conclude that the self-discovery story is successfully heard and practised within the groups, so that it produces an individual story that can reflect what has been learned and be assimilated into understanding the individual's life. This is achieved through the transformation of the intimate confessional to the culture of public problems, the story of a self that has been trapped and hidden by society. On the other side of this coin is the culture of positive hope for the future where personal and social benefits are voiced. The message of salvation is thus heard. This becomes the dominant story although another story of relationships between the group members also exists. The concrete social relations that make such stories possible can not be denied.

Chapter Six.

The Self-discovery Story in a wider setting.

In this chapter the conclusions, which I drew from the facilitators' and participants' stories, and the analysis of the story telling processes in the groups, are reflected against a wider setting. I suggest here that the self-discovery story identified in these groups is part of a wider story that achieves a particular momentum in an area I classify as alternative, through the recognition of an alternative area of health and education. The story becomes associated with an alternative theme, which makes a promise of changing the way an individual can live her or his life and proposes different ways for society to be organised. To show the location of the self-discovery story in this alternative understanding of health and education I have collected information from many alternative sites that I now explore.

In this chapter I locate alternative sites: centres, venues, directories, magazines and book shops, are a substantial concrete component of the networking system that exists in this alternative movement. As I highlighted in Chapter Four when I discussed the connections between the members of the groups in the research, networking is a very strong part of forming a community of support and a shared culture. The self-discovery story is not only shared through the telling in the groups, but becomes a concrete part of their social relations, where to go, where to meet and where and how to belong. My excursion into the information exchange in a wider setting has engaged many interesting issues of a developing culture. I perceive this culture in Becker's terms as a culture where stories keep defining the unity (1986). I hope to have shown the intricate connections that are produced and constructed when an individual enters this alternative area from many different areas. The networking of embodied knowledge involving both the theory and the practice, plus the realisation of personal friendships, connection and belonging, I suggest create a very strong effect of unity. The networking weaves its webs of connections. Some examples of this web spinning are illustrated by specific events that occurred in my fieldwork.

From the purchase of the "Grapevine"¹ directory a sequence of events unfolded. From here I started my research world, I joined the Shiatsu course where I made new friends. Through these friends I was invited to the Oxford "Green Fair". At this fair I gathered a lot of information. Later on, to see if some of my Shiatsu friends would be there, I attended another fair called the Oxford Fair of "Complementary Medicine". This was held in the same place and interestingly presented many of the same exhibitors as the Green Fair. It was here I met one of the group facilitators who became part of my research. I was now aware that in this type of practice, "fairs" were clearly a market for introducing people to new information. Continuing my research I visited as many fairs as I could, including "The Festival of Mind Body and Spirit", and "Esoteric Fair" in London and a "New Age Fair" and "Holistic Health" fair in Ipswich. This range of Fairs with different titles all exhibited a similar collection of information. At each fair I could find references to the application of healing and personal growth in association with the Mind, Body and Spirit triad that defines alternative health. I was also introduced to many new different ideas and theories from ecological concerns to new age beliefs. At a later stage of my research I find this experience of attending fairs reflected in advertisements in the magazines I had been introduced to. These advertisements show the presentation of fairs all over the country, with different titles, "*The Celebration of Healing*" "*The Spiritual Mind and Body*" "*Craft and New Age Fairs*"². The detailed look at the content of these fairs reveals the same content of health, personal growth, ecological and creative arts.

I responded to an advertisement from "Green Events"³ in Oxford, to attend the weekend workshop run by Jill. It transpires that Jill is also the co-editor. with her partner Peter, of Green Pages: the Oxford "Grapevine". I also find out that Jill has worked with Tony on Skyros, the residential holiday centre for self-discovery. At this weekend workshop, a participant was also a member of the RC local community and knew Martha. As Martha and Tony were already involved in my research I appeared to have a "passport" of recommendation. At this weekend workshop I am introduced to the work of Louise Hay, "Heal Yourself", plus the drumming and dance work of

¹ "Grapevine" directory is defined on page 188.

² Copied in appendix p.1.

³ "Green Events" is defined on page 188.

Gabrielle Roth in North America. I also receive information on this work from Martha the facilitator for RC since she has attended a group called "Life Dance" recently with facilitators who have trained with Gabrielle Roth. Martha places my name on the mailing list as she thinks I would be interested in their work. As I continue my collection of advertisements I realise that the Life Dance workshops tour the country. Moving near to Colchester and Ipswich, I pick up leaflets at alternative health centres on two other facilitators who also work in this area of dance and who are taught by Gabrielle Roth.

When I discussed the networks of the Seed Group in Chapter Four, I mentioned a participant who worked in nutrition. This nutritional expert brought her business, that engages pyramid selling to the group and several of the members got involved. Through this informal network of exchange I discover that the boyfriend of the woman I share an office with, now sells this nutritional product. They had met at another group in London and now they both attend an EST group in London. It appears that my friendships outside of the research world are now being incorporated into the same web of relations.

One of the participants in the Seed Group, Pashant, explores ancient sites and is a water diviner. Through his work he received a visit from the facilitator Michael who I interviewed in the research. Michael was locating sites in reference to his work on ancient Christianity and had been put in contact with Pashant. Hence Michael was introduced to Tony at his centre in Devon. My contacts within the research world met independently, constantly continuing the web of connections.

It is this web of connections, which the final processes of story telling to create a community of support and a culture of positive hope for change, for the individual and society. I locate these alternative sites within two interwoven areas, alternative health and alternative education, however I demonstrate that the presentation of education enables ecological, creative and many other themes to be included.

The Grapevine

I will now focus on a specific detailed analysis of advertisements in a local directory that highlight many of the issues I continue to discuss. Firstly, this directory

illustrates the placement of alternative therapy in a general directory of alternatives, which links complementary medicine, therapy, ecological concerns, and creative arts. Secondly, this directory reveals a gradual shift of emphasis reflected by the change of title from "The Grapevine" an alternative directory to "Living Well". Lastly, it demonstrates the growth in the number of facilitators and therapists advertising here.

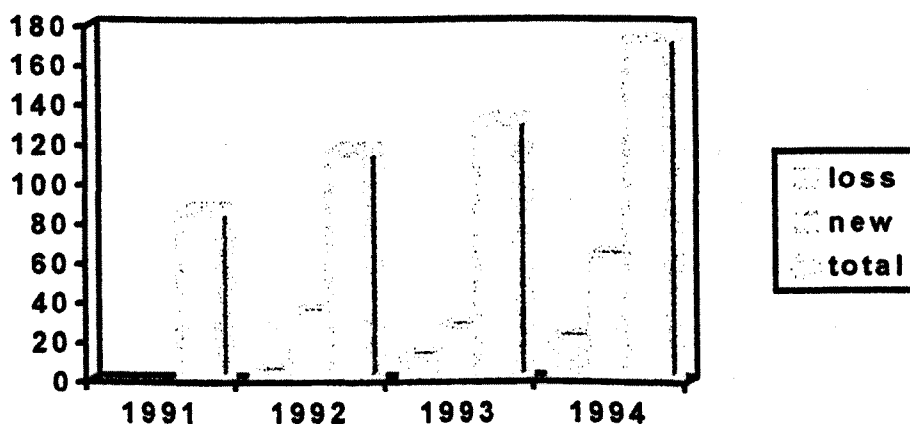
The Grapevine was produced yearly. In 1991, the editorial comment stated the Grapevine (green pages), to be the *"result of a collective effort to provide an alternative to the conventional Yellow pages for Oxford and the surrounding area"*⁴. This was produced by a co-operative style organisation who also produced a monthly listing called "Green Events". Green Events was produced locally, but in conjunction with other groups in Leeds and London. It was delivered free to many alternative outlets in a news sheet form. The objective was to provide an "alternative network" of information that linked together all local *"environmental, ecological, holistic and human potential events and courses"*⁵. After the original collection of entries in 1991 there was an increasing emphasis upon appearance and presentation. The 1994 edition had a glossy cover and an attractive desktop publisher style had been incorporated. The cost of the directory had also doubled. During this time there was a growth in entries and an increase in circulation and cost, corresponding with a change in editors. In the 1994 edition the emphasis of the title had changed to the *"Green Pages (the Oxford grapevine)"*. While the "green events" news sheet in 1994 still retained this title, from 1994 -1996 the Oxford edition changed the title to *"Living Well"*, and the Green Pages became increasingly more stylised and focused towards health issues. The collective editorial emphasis had been taken over by a partnership who were self employed in the area of alternative therapy. The "Living Well" title was the new business name of the couple who edited and published the Green Pages. It is interesting to note here the change of focus away from the ecological message to the message of health. This is not to suggest that the

⁴ Oxford Grapevine The Green Pages Directory of Alternatives. 1990-1991. New leaf Publishing p.1.

⁵ Advertisement for green events in "Transformer, new Life styles for changing times and natural ways to live and grow." Spring 1992, Quarterly No. 32 p. 18 given as the official guide to the 16th Festival of Mind Body and Spirit.

ecological concern has been minimised, but to suggest that the alternative health market has become more managed, presented, formalised and lucrative.

From 1990 -1994, I kept a check on the entries in the four editions of the Grapevine. The Grapevine directory classified its alternative listings in the areas of health, environment and creative. A clear distinction was made in the area of health between “*complementary medicine*” and “*psychotherapy and counselling*”. The analysis of the entries under the classification of complementary medicine and psychotherapy and counselling, revealed the growth of this alternative area and the number of total pages in the grapevine grew from 79 in 1990 to 115 in 1994. This increase was found predominantly in the complementary medicine and the personal, counselling section. The complementary medicine section advertisement space had doubled, with 13 extra pages. The space for counselling and personal entries grew from an original 5 pages in the 1991 edition to 19 pages in the 1994 edition. The increase in the number of entries here had necessitated the need for further subdivisions. The psychotherapy section was now classified into different types, e.g. Humanistic, analytical, and life skills counselling. The detailed analysis of these advertisements in this section over the four year period reveals that irrespective of entries that appeared for one year only, there was a steady increase each year, of new and stable advertisements. This increase illustrates a 100% growth in the number of facilitators advertising during this period.



My contact with the Grapevine started with my visit to the alternative bookshop. This demonstrates the web of relations that exist around this wider story providing constant new connections to receive and increase accessibility of information. Here the alternative network is explored.

Networks: Information Exchange.

This weaving together of information is made possible through the numerous networks of exchange that I found as I entered this alternative area. During my participation I was recommended books and where to buy them, I was told of fairs and exhibitions, likewise I became aware of the many venues and centres I have mentioned previously. At each place I have been able to receive more information about other practices and increase my knowledge on any of the themes highlighted. Leaflets advertising groups, directories and magazines all signpost many ways to extend this information.

Directories. It was from my interest in ecological and environmental concerns that I first visited the Alternative Book shop in Oxford. This book shop refers to itself as alternative as it provides books and magazines not stocked by the high street book shops. Not surprisingly this book shop is situated in what is commonly referred to as the more alternative area of East Oxford. From here I purchased the directory "*Oxford Grapevine: The Green Pages*". Such local directories of alternatives can be found in all main cities throughout the country. The ultimate publication and presentation I found being presented by "*Green Fax. A Holistic Handbook for Alternative Scotland*". An alternative directory published as a quarterly magazine, called "Chalice" for the South Wales Region, Bristol and West, reveals this explicit objective of networking. I would describe this Chalice directory as coming primarily from a New Age perspective although the same issues are covered.

"Chalice aim to create a networking and communication medium for local groups, societies, consultants and practitioners. It promotes all aspects of the multi

faceted spectrum of interests generally grouped under the umbrella of Alternative, Complementary, Aquarian, New Age and Green."⁶ .

Another directory I came across during the research (shown to me by a facilitator) covers the same aspects, but from the perspective of human potential rather than ecological or New Age concerns. "*The London Connection*" and "*South West Connection*" "*a guide to personal growth and natural therapies*", published by the Human Potential Movement. The London Connection states that it distributes free "*7,000 copies to the London area through centres, book shops, healthfood shops, vegetarian restaurants etc.*"⁷

"*Transformer*" is a guide to the festival of Mind Body and Spirit, an annual festival held in London every year. The festival has evolved from an alternative health focus. The classification of advertisements in this edition of *Transformer* shows the distinct association of practices that are seen to belong under this descriptive category of alternative health. The advertisements are located under the headings, trading places for books, directories and shops selling associated merchandise. Alternative medicine for aromatherapy, herbs, massage. Health and healing for Tai Chi, Shiatsu, Floatation, relaxation, crystal healing. Personal growth for counselling and psychotherapies and Spirituality and Philosophy for issues of planetary healing and spiritual practices.⁸ It appears that irrespective of the priority of the publication they all give access to the same information. Other forms of directories are found in many high quality magazines that promote various aspects of this alternative field.

Magazines. Eastern Light is a magazine published quarterly in East Anglia to promote events and discussion of issues of Mind, Body and Spirit. From this general alternative presentation the overall content reveals a strong spiritual objective shown in the title of Light.⁹

"In this issue we take a look at how we try to find and acknowledge the essence we believe is God. We also have news of Eastern Light's re-discovery of a long forgotten Stonehenge, here in East Anglia..... Also a fantastic Mind body and

⁶ Advertisement for Chalice in "*Transformer*" *ibid.* p. 17.

⁷ The London Connection A guide to personal growth and natural therapies in the London area. Issue No.4 December 92/ March 93. P. 18.

⁸ *Transformer*, *ibid.*

⁹ Eastern Light The east Anglian Magazine for Mind, Body Spirit. Number 7 Autumn 1994

Spirit diary listing local contacts and What's On..... Also your regular current horoscope, poetry and book reviews".

Link Up, Kindred Spirit, and Mind Body and Soul are other magazines published on a wider scale monthly and bimonthly with this alternative message of individual and planetary healing prominent in this alternative field. The specific magazine to promote personal growth "*I to I*", reflects this range of ecological and health issues through its choice of highlights presented from their calendar of events in October 1994 :

- *The Spiritual, Mind, Body Exhibition, Manchester.*
- *The National CND demonstration in London,*
- *The Independent Therapists Network meeting at the Open Centre London.*¹⁰

Even the focused title of the "*Yoga Journal*" magazine, the title page leads with the main articles on *Healing and Love* and the *Tarot cards*.¹¹

The groups in the context of alternative health.

In Chapter One I identified an area of alternative therapy. In 1984 the report from the British Medical Association's working party referred to alternative therapies (Saks 1992). Many examples of work from other interested groups define this area as alternative health, the holistic approach of the mind, body and spirit. (Sharma 1991, Lewith & Aldridge 1991, Warren Salmon 1984, Stalker & Glymour 1989). Here health becomes a synthesis for therapy, healing, personal growth, well-being and other terms to describe a positive change in an individual.

Reflections in alternative health.

This developing area of alternative health (Fulder 1988, Sharma 1992, Lewith and Aldridge 1991) gives the self-discovery story and the belief in an inner self, a shared community of support for the belief in an alternative way of understanding yourself. It is through the belief in something essential, which incorporates all subjective experiences and has the possibility to be connected with a spiritual energy, healing potential and personal growth. To explore the location of

¹⁰ "I to I a forum for change, Issue 20 Oct.-Dec. 1994. Distributed by Time Out. P. 36

¹¹ *Yoga Journal*. March/April 1992 Issue 103. Good fellows publisher California.

this alternative therapy further in this presentation of health, this mix and match of different approaches can be seen in the rise of centres that provide the venues for such groups. The facilitators in this sample all have developed their own working space, but they also work in other venues. During this research I have become aware of many towns that have a local centre devoted to the development of this alternative health perspective. The names of these local centres show the connection between the terms associated with health, healing and personal growth in this alternative network.

- * The Well-being Clinic,
- * Holistic Health Centre,
- * Health and Healing Centre,
- * Natural Health Centre
- * Healing and Training Centre
- * Centre for Spiritual, Physical & Emotional Healing,
- * Life Force Centre,
- * Natural Well-being Centre.
- * Health Works.
- * Life Ways.

I have found these centres in Oxford, Ipswich, Colchester, Chelmsford, Clacton, Hadleigh, Glemsford, Bristol, Edinburgh, Norwich, Cambridge, Lewes and Forres in Scotland. There is a wide range of similar centres advertised in directories produced in London and the South West of England. At these centres the same variety of facilitators are found; acupuncturists, osteopaths, colour therapists, counsellors, psychotherapists, aromatherapists, all representing the wide range of miscellaneous systems of healing identified in the BMA report (Saks 1992) and described in detail in Ruth West's classification that I mention in Chapter One (1992). For example, The Well-Being Clinic and the Trinity Centre show the focus towards natural therapies in which healing and counselling and psychotherapy are integral. While these two centres can be perceived to be venues for the organisation

of complementary medicine defined by such systems such as acupuncture, homeopathy, herbals, a detailed look at their of events illustrates the wide variety of approaches that are associated with this alternative perspective. The Trinity Centre hosts weekend workshops that can introduce you to the wide range of holistic thought, and the message of knowing yourself, healing and potential growth is linked to activities such as drumming, astrology and learning about your inner intuition.¹² Again this supports the understanding of this alternative network of information as constantly weaving and crossing various thoughts and approaches.

It is interesting to note that while many centres have been recently formed for the use of holistic health practitioners, previously established centres associated with other concerns have now incorporated similar practices. For example a recreational hall in Oxfordshire that has hosted spiritual healing for many years now presents in its programme sessions on massage, meditation, Bach Flower remedies, and Tai Chi Chuan.¹³ The clairvoyant and the alternative therapist are advertised side by side. Other established centres such as the Friends Meeting House in Oxford is also now a venue for complementary health practices. I suggest therefore that this combination of the familiar and accepted such as yoga, with the strange and unfamiliar such as “polarity therapy” and “reiki”, is made possible through the recognition of some inner sense, a subjective experience that cannot be quantified or observed, but felt. Therefore all aspects of approaching individual well-being are linked together with the ease of understanding the body, the psyche and the spiritual from a central concept of an inner energy. For instance, Eastern teachings in body-work such as Tai chi, Chi Gong, find an easy relationship with this association of alternative health and self-discovery field through this description of inner energy which becomes synonymous with an inner self. The senses of the body are also brought forward in the therapeutic work of aromatherapy, sound therapy, colour therapy. While the body remains a central focus for the “treatment” that alternative medicine practices offer, such as acupuncture and herbalism, my concern here is that the story that accompanies this focus upon the body contains a very different theme that contrasts with the biomedical mechanistic explanations presented in western or orthodox medical practice. In the alternative health understanding the body becomes a

¹² The Trinity Centre programme is copied into the appendix p.2.

representation of energy, that is in continual flow and balance. It is this conception of body that fits easily into the holistic understanding of mind, body and spirit. The body remains material, but with an unseen, invisible emphasis. This concept of energy contains an inner sense of experience and feelings and links directly with the definition of an inner self. The understanding of holistic healing enables numerous approaches to be used all with the same objective, to free any restriction or block in this energy flow.

There is also a clear development in the association of the spiritual with healing. Spiritual healing has existed for many years and one survey in 1985 suggests that this is the most frequently used form of alternative therapy (Fulder & Munro.1985). I have selected two advertisements that clearly show how spiritual healing has adapted to the alternative health field. The National Federation of Spiritual Healers leaflet states this form of healing as the "*holistic way to health*".¹⁴ The next advertisement describes spiritual healing as channelling, that accesses a specific type of external energy although it is still perceived as being in direct contact with this inner energy through the understanding of interconnection. The advertisement from an alternative health centre in Colchester, "*The Trinity Centre, A natural way to Health and Healing*", illustrates a distinct way that "channelled healing" occurs in close proximity with other complementary therapy practitioners, such as massage and aromatherapy.¹⁵ The advertisement for "*Seamlessness*" and the advertisement for "*Polarity Therapy*", that I have mentioned previously, from two different facilitators working in Oxford and Devon respectively, illustrates how the understanding of energy underpins the alternative health movement. This energy can be perceived as a deep sense of spirituality, from an understanding of "oneness" to the understanding of innate healing abilities within. Life energy therefore is seen as both external and internal, it is all around us and within each person. Problems with health and well-being therefore become energy that is blocked and restricted and to examine yourself becomes a method to unblock these restrictions, as shown so clearly in the story of salvation identified in the facilitators' stories.

¹³ Programme placed in appendix p.3.

¹⁴ Leaflet collected at Complementary Medicine Fair. Copied into appendix p.3.

¹⁵ Programme for the Trinity Centre placed in the appendix p.3.

Reflections of the groups in a wider setting.

The first key reflection in examining the range of advertisements I collected is the consensus found in this area of defining an inner self, something inside each individual that can be brought forward to become a positive change. For example one advertisement uses the same name as Tony's group, although its approach is different, here the symbol of the seed becomes the SEED Institute, defined as Self-Exploration Education and Development. This interpretation of SEED promises the same objective as "seed group", *"the unfoldment of the true self"*, where the outcome of personal growth and healing is named. This SEED Institute, based in Hampshire, offers workshops and training in methods that can be used to encourage this true self to emerge.¹⁶

There are many reflections that associate counselling with beneficial change that an individual may experience. Here, I have chosen an example of an advertisement that highlights a similar understanding of counselling as shown in the RC group, but also links the technique of Neurolinguistic Programming, the method that the facilitator Jen describes in her story. The advertisement is for "POWER" workshops based in Essex and London. Here similar objectives and promises are made *"creating empowering relationships through effective counselling skills"*.¹⁷ Advertisements for workshops, courses and groups continue to reflect the main psychotherapeutic influences mentioned by the facilitators in my sample. The reflection upon creating better relationship as shown by Jill and Peter's work is observed in another advertisements. For example *"Inner Journey Workshops"* based in Cheshire describes the objective of *"learning how to love yourself and change your life"*. The series of workshops are named as *"Inner Child"*, *"Learning to love the Self"*, exhibiting very similar terms to Jill's workshop based on Louise Hay's method.¹⁸ As well as the general psychotherapeutic reflection of relationships and freedom from repression, there are frequent references and organisations that reflect specific psychoanalytical schools such as *"Transpersonal Workshops"* developed

¹⁶ Advertisement is copied into the appendix p.4, from Magazine, "I to I" Dec. 1994..

¹⁷ Leaflet collected at a local alternative health centre in Oxford, copied into appendix p.4.

¹⁸ Advertisement is copied into the appendix p.4. from Magazine, "Kindred Spirit" Spring 1995.

from the work of Karl Jung and “Body-psychotherapy” or “Psychodynamic bodywork”, developed from the work of Wilhelm Reich.¹⁹

The spiritual theme of connection brought forward in many stories, particularly those of Tony, Claudia, and Chris, this is reflected in the development of other areas of psychotherapeutic practices. An advertisement for Psychosynthesis, which I observed in magazines such as the Mind, Body and Spirit, and which I collected a leaflet on at a local workshop in Ipswich, states:

*“Its aim is to help people realise their true spiritual nature and to utilise this discovery effectively in everyday life. It is a means through which people can live out their creative potential, increase their ability to function in the world, and improve the quality of their relationships”.*²⁰

Another advertisement for workshops called “Seamlessness”, reflects this explicit spiritual connection with the possibility of spiritual channelling as described in the stories of Patricia, Jen and Claudia.

“Seamlessness is the absence of pain, anxiety and suffering, struggle and burden. It is the abundance of health, well-being and synchronicity in all of your life. It is you, living as your whole self in harmony peace plenty and fulfilment. It is living in the conscious Oneness with the entire Universe in celebration of its power, energy and love.”

The following section in this advertisement continues to reflect how this spirituality incorporates the psychotherapeutic promise shown in the RC group.

*“Seamlessness is also releasing the layers of pretence, defence and denial, such as illness, poverty fear guilt and blame. With which we all learn to cover our true selves as we grow into adults. It's discovering that in the letting go is the true safety and our joy. It is dissolving the need for barriers and boundaries, defences and divisions that keep us separate from ourselves”*²¹

This last sentence concerning defences and barriers is remarkable in its similarity with a statement made by Martha, the RC facilitator.

*“ It's realising that something's led back to our defensiveness, there are a lot of things about fear defence, division and boundaries that keep ourselves separate from each other and from nature ”*²²

¹⁹ Advertisements are copied into the appendix , collected at WISE group and from local directory “Grapevine” p.5.

²⁰ Leaflet for Psychosynthesis copied into the appendix p.5. collected from local alternative health centre in Colchester.

²¹ Leaflet for Seamlessness collected at an alternative bookshop in Oxford. copied into the appendix p.5.

²² Martha RC facilitator interview.

Another clear reflection of spirituality in some advertisements echoes similar objectives to those found in the approach of Michael and Patricia's work. Polarity Therapy is described in its advertisement as using chakra points from Hindu teachings and crystals.²³ The emphasis upon the spirituality of nature and natural cycles found in Claudia's and Chris' work is also reflected. A weekend group is advertised in Suffolk called "*Touch the Earth: A day to reconnect with nature*".²⁴ A programme from an organisation called "*Gatekeeper Trust*" in Worcestershire advertises "*Sacred Journeys: Healing the Earth: Healing Ourselves*".²⁵

The final reflection I wish to highlight is the centrality of Yoga throughout all these areas. All the facilitators except Chris and Michael mention the importance of Yoga in introducing them to Eastern thoughts. An advertisement for a residential course on the Isle of Mull, shows an interesting assimilation of how Yoga appears connected with western psychotherapeutic approaches. "*The Heart of the Matter: A personal development workshop, involving Integral Yoga with Psychotherapeutic techniques*".²⁶

Reflections in alternative education.

The next main reflection that is already illustrated in the examples given above, is how this mix and match of knowledge in an experiential understanding, can be taught. The use of the descriptive terms such as "course", "Institute", "workshop" directly imply that this experiential knowledge can be learnt. These courses, workshops and groups, promise to teach people a variety of ways to change and provide new skills and techniques that can be applied. This educational setting integrates the possibility for the individual to feel better about themselves, and therefore is frequently found alongside descriptions of health, healing and well-being, ecological, environmental, nature, and natural, creative potential, development and growth.

²³ Leaflet collected at the Seed Group copied into appendix p6.

²⁴ Advertisement displayed on local notice board in Ipswich. Copied into appendix p.6.

²⁵ Leaflet collected during WISE group copied into appendix p 6.

²⁶ Advertisement for group in Magazine Mind Body and Soul, copied into appendix p.6.

It is through this theme of change, which the belief in an inner self as an area from which to discover yourself, can frequently be found in conjunction with a health and/or an environmental frame and/or the creative arts. This can best be illustrated by the advertisements for centres that host such courses and workshops. "Lifeways" in Stratford upon Avon, state their objective to be arts, education, health, environment, personal development. Their summer 1993 programme offers courses ranging from "Yoga" and "Tai Chi" to "Nurturing your Inner Child", and "Know Yourself, Help Yourself through hand writing analysis".²⁷ A centre in Lewes called "Flint House" describes itself as a "Natural Health and Learning Centre", advertising such courses as "The Healing Experience" and "Men's workshop on Shame, The Inner Child and the False Self".²⁸ The word "lecture" is used to advertise talks in a wide variety of subjects that continue to imply this understanding of self-discovery, as shown by the Spring programme on Alternatives advertised at St. James's Church Piccadilly. These Monday lectures include, "Living Truthfully" and "The Voice of the Earth, an exploration into Ecopsychology".²⁹

The creative arts become another source through which you can know and heal yourself. Music for relaxation and meditation is marketed in association with alternative health.³⁰ An advertisement for a workshop to learn drumming is clearly defined in a therapeutic expression, associated with releasing and experiencing "raw energy". This workshop is held at the "Healing Centre" in North London.³¹ Another creative expression is found in the advertisements of dance workshops. "Healing Movement" and "Life Dance" again link with this understanding of energy that can become trapped in the body or mind and needs releasing. A particular approach to dance is explained by the work of Gabrielle Roth "a method of using dance to free first the body and then the psyche".³² In this educational frame and practice the combination of energy as some inner force, and the revelation of an inner self are brought together by the inclusion of many different forms of knowledge. I looked at this in detail with my research sample, when I noted the facilitators' use of

²⁷ Programme for "Lifeways" copied into appendix p.7.

²⁸ Programme for "Flint House" copied into appendix p.7.

²⁹ Programme for St James Church copied into appendix p.8.

³⁰ Examples of advertisements from Magazine, "Mind, Body & Soul" placed into appendix p.8.

³¹ Advertisements for drumming placed in appendix p.9.

³² Advertisements for dance placed in appendix p.10.

knowledge that informs their practice in Chapter Three. This overarching story compiled from advertisements thus continues to reflect this vast arrangement of mix and match knowledge that can be taught in this alternative setting of education. This is eased through the recognition of personal growth. In contrast to the Health centres that incorporate the human potential message, many centres focus explicitly upon the promise of personal growth.³³ References and themes from different cultures, myths and legends are frequently found in the practices advertised. The various myths, legends and ancient practices commonly used are from Celtic mythology, North American Indian Shamanism, Hawaiian philosophy - Huna, Legends of King Arthur and the holy Grail, The Roman and Greek Goddesses and Gods. All are used to help an individual discover something about her/himself, to provide different reference points upon which to understand inner feelings and experiences.

Therefore I propose that this incorporation of the psychotherapeutic promise of self-discovery observed in the research groups extends into a developing culture of positive change achieved through the educational framing of this story with health, personal growth, creativity and ecological awareness. This is especially highlighted in the information I collected that advertised residential educational venues.

Residential Centres :

From the written documentation collected, residential centres offer a variety of these alternative groups and exist all over the country including Devon, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Great Yarmouth, Somerset, Exeter, Cornwall, Wales and Scotland. Many of these residential centres are communities that seek to live an alternative life style and generate income from the hire of their facilities. Some communities explicitly exist to develop places to provide "*a safe and supportive environment for the evolution of Human Kind and the nurturing of life*" (Gaunts House, Dorset).³⁴ Gaunts House hosts about 100 courses per year that include groups on relationships, sexuality and love, astrology, and Alexander techniques. In this area of alternative, one of the most well known residential community centres is Findhorn in Scotland (as mentioned by Wendy), which has a strong spiritual base from its

³³ Advertisements for Personal Growth Centres copied into the appendix p.11.

³⁴ Advertisement for Gaunts House from Mind Body and Soul, May/June 1994 p.23. Copied into appendix p.12

founding by Peter and Eileen Caddy. Their early work of living in spiritual attunement with nature is still continued in the, now vast, Findhorn Foundation. As the Foundation explains “*we have no formal doctrine or creed, we believe that humanity is involved in an evolutionary expansion of consciousness which is creating new patterns of civilisation and a planetary culture infused with spiritual values*”.³⁵ The creation of Gaunts House and Findhorn Community into Foundations illustrates their charitable status. This charitable status is achieved for registration through the objective of education. They aim to develop courses that teach people new life skills and encourage a different understanding to health, knowing yourself and living communally and living in balance with the environment. Similarly, Redfield community, an ecologically focused community for 12 years, has created The Redfield Educational Foundation. This is a charitable company set up with the objective of educating the public in matters concerning: “*the environment: ecologically sound food production sustainable living and working environments, the practise of the arts, community services and equal opportunities*”.³⁶ Although the listing of environmental courses is dominant in the Redfield calendar, counselling and therapies are also listed. This type of organisation is reflected in *Lower Shaw Farm*, an organic farm, although the scale of courses is smaller and they have not registered for charitable status.³⁷

In contrast to the focus of environmental communities, some communities exist primarily for personal growth. A centre directly termed a centre for personal growth runs similar courses and calls itself “*Little Grove Education*”.³⁸ This theme of education is a constant one and is found echoed in the facilitators of the groups described in this research. Continuing this residential setting, I have received information from this network of two alternative holiday centres, *Cortijo Romero* in Spain that is run by the Little Grove Centre for personal development and *Skyros* in Greece which is composed of a centre and community. The *Skyros* centre advertises personal development, Holistic body work, Green Theory and Art. Alongside this centre, the *Atsitsa* community is where people live communally and are able to book

³⁵ The Findhorn Foundation Guest Programme Oct./ April 1995.

³⁶ Redfield News. Spring 1993.

³⁷ Lower Shaw farm advertised in Oxford Grapevine, copy placed in appendix p.12

³⁸ Little Grove leaflet copied into appendix p.12.

the same range of courses. There are also smaller holiday concerns illustrated by the *Le Plan*, in the Provence the setting for residential courses in “*Change and Healing*” and “*The Manior Les Thomas*” a home for holistic holidays and the creative and healing arts organised by the Energy exchange network.³⁹

I now suggest that the self-discovery stories can be placed in a wider cultural perspective to show an overarching story that links many of these themes together. The conclusions I have gathered from my analysis of my fieldwork are reflected in the collection, selection and observation of advertisements that I undertook during this study. This collection was an inevitable part in my involvement in the groups, as membership gave me access to numerous ways of information exchange about the knowledge used in the groups and other areas, which become linked with this knowing. These advertisements reflect the framing and social practices that confirm this definition of an inner self and how this may lead to personal growth and healing. I conclude that these social practices can predominantly be placed in the descriptive umbrella of alternative health, however the incorporation of alternative education extends this understanding of health into many areas.

The web of connections grow and where each point crosses over, new nodes develop sending out fresh strands. I conclude here that the story telling, which exists in this alternative area of therapy constructs a distinct cultural world. I suggest that membership into this culture of alternative is very fluid and open. I have tried to show here the many ways of networking in the attempt to demonstrate the unity and diversity of alternative beliefs and the many pathways that may bring a person into contact with this overarching story. For any story to exist it depends upon the construction of a web of relations in order for the story to be produced and consumed. An integral constituent of this web is to place this production and consumption in a health and educational frame and practice. The story therefore continues to develop a culture of hope for positive change.

³⁹ Programmes for Skyros, Cortijo Romero, The Manior, copied into appendix p13.

Part three.

Myself.

This is the last section of the research process, where I continue to show the final evolution of my sociological identity. However I still remain concerned that I have become a narrator of others. What does this mean to my autobiography? Did I enter such groups purely for the objective of research? As I stated in the opening, my first attendance at the seed group brought me a hope to bring all the parts of my life together. To look at myself and to explore why many others were doing the same. Like many of the participants I too felt that there was something missing in my life, even though my home and working life were progressing in just the ways I wanted. Like Dave, the groups brought me into contact with my emotions that, like Dawn, I had kept hidden for many years. Like Arthur I had a hope for creating a positive relationship, someone I could share my life with. Like Lesley and James I met someone in the seed group and fell in love. As Stevi Jackson states "even sociologists fall in love" (1993). Kevin is now a vital part of myself. He is my mirror, that reflects the parts that are difficult to change, the parts I often seek to deny. The emotions that make me feel vulnerable, dependent, out of control. He reflects the parts that are the emotions of passion, joy and happiness. Like Giddens' recognition of a pure relationship that employs a confluent love, where both parties look to meet the needs of each other, I attempt to create a positive relationship, that gives me a hope for the future. Like Nina, being involved with someone who is also aware of this world of self-discovery continues to place understanding what goes on inside as the most important issue. Kevin faces me with an inner reality, that my sociological identity does not necessarily employ. This is because in this research world of autobiography we seek to place a sociological identity in the fore. As C Wright Mills notes with his "intellectual craftsmanship" (1959), and which Liz Stanley advocates in an "intellectual autobiography", we demand that sociologists who explore issues of subjectivity to remain sociological. Obviously, if they do not what use would this be to the discipline? I feel I have achieved this intellectual assessment sufficiently to appease my sociological audience, but it does leave me feeling that I have not been true to my sense of self. I have tried to weave my stories to show how my knowledge is situated in a whole sense of my life, but somehow my personal weaving has remained a much smaller part. Perhaps this is the same as the major and minor keys, identified in the participant's stories. Here I have made the intellectual autobiography my objective, in which the personal, emotional details are not so necessary.

I have learnt techniques and tools, to accept responsibility for the life I create and that has been an essential evolution in writing this PhD. I accept that I have created this story. My life has changed. I now tell many different stories that as well as reconstructing my understanding of the past, continue to give me a sense of an anticipated future. This research has brought me new friends, a sense of belonging and constant confirmations in ways of knowing. It has brought me a vast wealth of knowledge that I use on many levels. I do yoga, I meditate, I try to understand my dreams, I look within and I find that I want to continue to care for

myself as this brings me a hope for the future. I am sharing my life with a partner who also shares these things. I talk about my past in a whole new way. I am aware of how I was in my marriage. I can see myself repeating things with my children that I do not want to. I have become the centre of my stories through the self becoming the narrator. In this self I can place all the parts that I wish and assemble and organise my experiences accordingly. My contact with the self has evolved a plot where the character is made known. In conjunction with this story of the self, my sociological story has also a distinct plot where my sociological identity is made known. I am now able to negotiate where I belong in this sociological world. As this part of my research story closes I have a greater sense of an anticipated future of where I will continue to go.

Chapter seven.

The changing content of life stories.

The self-discovery stories.

My analysis of the groups in which I participated, the stories that I gathered there, the wider setting of this story and the networks produced, present the following conclusions:

- The plot of the self-discovery stories is set by the facilitators' metaphor of path or journey to describe what is regarded as the process of realizing the existence of an inner self. The key theme to define this experience of an inner self is connection, which may be spiritual, permitting many spiritual traditions to be used, and /or may entail exploration of a positive engagement with relationships. The experience of this inner self is described as revealing a greater truth, reality and wisdom in contrast to the effects of social life which are perceived as providing a false and restrictive sense of self.

- The social practices of the groups depend upon the psychotherapeutic understanding of self-disclosure, through the release and expression of emotions. Feelings are regarded as the key to make this inner self tangible. From this emotional release, negative experiences of repression, restriction and loss, are transformed into the self-discovery story, which demonstrates a new way of understanding these experiences. The story telling techniques of the circle and the confessional enable this expression of emotions to be developed into a reconstructed story. Here the individual's story becomes transformed into a shared story. The practice of this sharing in a group develops an important sense of belonging and connection on a physical level with other members of the group.

- The stories told by the participants in the interview setting echo the main themes of self-discovery from the alternative therapy groups. Thus, we find the same framing theme of connection related to two areas. Firstly in the use of spiritual descriptions of connection with the universe and the 'whole' and secondly, connection described as an objective to achieve in intimate relationships. All the

participants' stories have different emphases that reflect which sort of connection is important to them. From the groups, all participants describe a changed awareness of a sense of self, an awareness expressed as a new identity for themselves. The stories also echo similar statements to those found in the facilitators' proclamations, a belief in a positive change for society as well as themselves.

- Therefore the quest for self-discovery fulfills two important outcomes, which the research suggests are achieved and enabled by the way that life stories are told. This discovery of an inner self gives a sense of meaning to the stories on both a spiritual level and an every day practical level concerning social relationships. Therefore past experiences are transformed into a new story of self-discovery. This constructs a moral story reflecting the change of negative experiences into positive opportunities for personal growth.

- The groups are framed and practiced in an alternative network that I discuss in chapter six. This alternative setting usually occurs outside of formal health and educational institutions and is located in the private market. The methods used in this setting develop a combination of knowledge selected and represented in close association with the promise of healing and personal growth. The emphasis of this way of knowing yourself is firmly placed in individual experience, understood by the psychotherapeutic self in combination with a self from eastern philosophy. Hence this enables the incorporation of many references to different ways of understanding individuality, from myths and nature, to cultural traditions from all over the world. The practice of this alternative setting provides an information exchange, where many different aspects of knowledge may be explored and introduced to the individual.

To explore these research conclusions I will present two distinct interpretations. In chapter seven I will explore the content of the self-discovery stories told by the facilitators and participants in the interview setting. Here I argue that this content illustrates a specific production and consumption of an alternative psychotherapeutic story, which portrays a modern reflexive self. In chapter eight I turn this interpretation the other way round to show how the alternative psychotherapeutic influence construct the very idea of a reflexive self in the first

instance by its governance of story telling strategies and providing a distinct script to be learnt.

In this chapter the themes identified from the content analysis of inner/outer, connection/disconnection will be discussed in relation to the theorised consequences and characteristics of modernity. In this interpretation the influence of psychotherapeutic understanding in life stories can be seen as an area of enabling and coming to terms with social change in modern social life. By discussing the proposal that the psychotherapies have aided the constitution of a narcissistic culture I argue that this cultural shift can be seen to be a result of the lay reception of knowledge and the plurality of discourses that challenge and permit the individualisation of life stories (Lasch 1979, Giddens 1991, Smart 1993). Consequently in this chapter I will argue that this area of alternative therapies provides a route for the reconstruction of and reconciliation between the individual and society, which depends upon a psychotherapeutic understanding of 'the self'. Therefore I illustrate how the model of a reflexive self, central to understanding social theories of modernity and postmodernity, automatically assumes a problematic sense of identity (Berman 1992, Giddens 1991, Berger et al 1973). This assumption of encountering problems when gaining a secure sense of identity, or a unified sense of self, depends upon the inner location and residence of emotions. Here the social theories that seek to explain social change in contemporary social life also locate an inner sense of individuality and being real to yourself. It is this expression that presumes an inner emotional self, which in both the self-discovery stories and the social theories, propose a distinct way of seeing individual autonomy and authenticity arise from the existence of an inner subjectivity upon which psychotherapy depends. Therefore I conclude that, although the compositions of the research groups are white and middle class, the success of the psychotherapeutic influence upon the telling of life stories can be seen as being closely associated with a distinct way of seeing modern social life. Thus the content of the self-discovery stories confirms a sense of change, which reflects the way that modern social life is perceived as change. The understanding of change is founded upon modern day notions of reflexivity.

To discuss this in detail I will firstly present the theories, which propose a problematic modern identity in association with a reflexive modernity. I will use the general description of a narcissistic culture to present the two strands of thought, the increasing privatisation of personal experiences and the rise of the psychotherapies. I will discuss how major social changes in faith, consumption and relationships are argued to increasingly place meaningful intimate experiences into a privatised area of social life. I will then relate the development of the psychotherapies to this privatised area of creating more meaningful experiences. By exploring the way that the alternative psychotherapeutic message has been assimilated into the content of the self-discovery stories I propose that the explanations of “lay reception” (Giddens 1992), and “heresy” (Smart 1993) provides support that there are indeed new ways of knowing available for each person to understand themselves in relation to the social life they live in. This has been brought about by the enabling, authorial process of the psychotherapeutic story telling.

A Problematic Modern Identity.

One of the central methods of defining the inner self in the stories of facilitators and participants is to contrast the definition and experience of an inner self with the experience of being in the social world. It is from this contrast that the inner self becomes defined as a “core”, which remains located inside each individual, hidden and untouched by learned social responses. In the story telling the social becomes “the baddie”, and such descriptive terms are used as: “*defence, boundaries, control, manipulation, materialistic*” where the individual is “*trapped*” and “*manufactured*”. The self-discovery story then becomes one where the true sense of self is rescued from the problems of social life. Direct similarities can be seen between the thematic descriptions of the inner/outer, connection/disconnection, developed in the self-discovery stories with the theoretical discussions of modernity, where the social theories of modernity suggest modern identity to be in crisis and exemplify these inner/outer connection/disconnection themes (Berman 1992, Giddens 1991, Berger et al 1973).

The term modernity has been linked to social changes from the historical period of the enlightenment to contemporary life, where the characteristics of modern social change are contrasted with a perspective of stability and traditional order associated with the past (Berman 1992). Changes in modern day life are said to alter subjective experiences, transform the way that the individual understands her or his social life and vice versa this changed understanding constitutes the very nature and pace of social change. This understanding is achieved through the developing knowledge and institutional systems of science, medicine, social sciences, art, technology, economics and politics, which enable people to become *"the subjects and objects of modernisation; they must learn to change the world that is changing them and to make it their own"* (Berman p.32 1992). It is this proposition that all individuals have become 'the subjects and objects of modernisation' that is taken up in the alternative therapy stories supporting the belief in a true self in conflict with social life. The concepts of alienation from Marxism, anomie from Durkheim's work and the disenchantment that would follow the increasing bureaucratisation of social life proposed by Weber, all describe an experience of disconnection between the realisation of a sense of individuality and the social roles of work in an developing capitalist industrial nation.¹ Two central characteristics of social change are identified from the progression of technology and bureaucracy that construct differentiated and separated social worlds, described by Berger, Berger and Kellner as the "pluralization of life worlds" (1973:64). As the individual moves between these different compartmentalised social worlds it is argued that a sense of identity becomes problematic and in conflict with these worlds. Thus modern identity is perceived as in permanent crisis, reflective and peculiarly individuated (Berger et al 1973). Such theories of modernisation, which propose a reflexive individual are linked with an understanding of rationalisation and secularisation to propose a cultural change where self identity becomes an area of self development (Featherstone 1988). This understanding of modernity demonstrates a tension between the opportunities that such social change has brought forward for each individual and the increasing rationalisation of social control. It is

¹ As well as the original sources I find A. Giddens Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, Cambridge University Press 1971, clarifies these concepts of alienation, p.10-14. anomie, p. 79-81, disenchantment of the world and rationalisation 178-184.

the area of self-development that has become increasingly linked with psychological and psychotherapeutic understanding, suggesting a specific culture of self-identity.

As stated in Chapter one (p.28) I have focused this research on the description of "late modernity" identified primarily from the work of Anthony Giddens (1990 1991 1992). The abstraction of 'late' is used to define a modern time with a recent past, where social change is discussed in reference to the post world-war years in Europe and America. Here the '*pace of change*', '*the scope of change*' and '*the nature of modern institutions*' (Giddens 1990:6) are argued to have culminated in a modern reflexive identity, where individual opportunity is constantly placed against increasing areas of rationalisation and bureaucratic control. The proposition arises that as the characteristics and consequences of modernity have increased, especially the differentiation of social worlds, the corresponding sense of identity becomes more fragmented. A central division of life worlds that appears in these theories is the distinction between a more public social world and an inner subjective private world. This differentiation locates the private world as the more feeling, real world where the individual can be her or himself. It is this that appears to be a central idea in a problematic sense of modern identity which I will now explore.

Throughout the analysis I have shown how the generalised influence of the psychotherapeutic message is used in the alternative therapy groups to promise that the expression and uncovering of emotions leads to the experience and knowledge of an inner self in contrast to a social self. This inner self is then described and judged to be more authentic, real and true and used to narrate a different sense of identity that arises from within the individual. The self discovery groups use a model of emotions based on individualistic experiences that arise internally. This inner location of emotions within the container of the self is proposed to be a more authentic sense of identity uncovered from the learnt social identity.

The interpretation of the content analysis presented here works from the assumption made in the self-discovery stories that the terms identity and self present an interchangeable definition for each other. Thus explanations of the self are automatically explorations of how a sense of identity arises. In Chapter One I discussed two explanatory models of self identity, the psychoanalytic and the

interactionist models that propose different emphases in how to describe a sense of self. Both these models can be linked to the philosophical foundation of telling life stories and creating a sense of identity through the formation of unity and connection of life experiences. The psychoanalytical and interactionist models of self recognise the importance of communication, within the inner world of the individual, where reflection becomes the nature of subjectivity, and outside of the individual, where 'the other' is an essential component of this ability to reflect. The central difference between the two models of psychoanalysis and interactionist appears to be the emphasis placed upon reflexivity and/or relationships. The emphasis upon reflexivity within the psychotherapeutic models of understanding appear to stress the importance of communication within. This can be seen in the alterantive therapies demonstrated in the research in Louise Hay's work, which highlights the request to 'talk to your inner child'. In the psychoanalytical theoretical world complicated explanations of this inner communication between the unconscious and the conscious exist, for example popular modern psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Kristeva present many layers of unconscious/ conscious communication (Craib 1989). It is this inner location of reflexivity that is presented in the content of the self-discovery stories. I will return to the contrasting exploration of reflexivity proposed in the interactionist explanation of self identity in more depth in the next chapter. Here I will explore the concept of self identity where the understanding of reflexivity is shown in the psychotherapies and theories of modernity to be primarily located as an inner dialogue and an internal private residence of emotions.

Reflexive Modernity

The experiences of late modernity may be perceived as increasing social change that constitutes the decline of social life, increasing individualism and disconnection, but also encompasses the opposite experiences of increasing freedom and choice (Berman 1992). These opposing characteristics are discussed by Giddens (1991, 1992, 1994) as leading to a paradox. Giddens describes this paradox as a key constituent in the reflexive construction of self identity. Through reflexivity Giddens proposes that each person has options of how s/he interprets his/her experiences,

which is the form of reflexive, self-examination found in the general presentation of the psychotherapies and the alternative therapy groups. The objective of the alternative therapy groups is to bring the possibility of change into the persons life and the telling of self-discovery stories brings a sense of autonomous creative, choice into self-identity stories. Anthony Elliot summaries the connection between the development of psychoanalysis and social theory, to show how these inconsistencies that arise in our experiences are interpreted against the opposing poles of: security and danger, trust and risk, enhancement and restriction, unification and fragmentation, dispersal and re-appropriation, displacement and re-embedding, powerlessness and empowerment (Elliot 1992). The inconsistencies presented in the dualities act in a dialogue within each person and from one to another. Central to this explanation of modern identity as a result of a reflexive culture is the hidden assumption of a privatised emotional world. It is important to identify this concept of self-identity as the inner location of feelings and emotions. The theoretical propositions of modernity suggest that the feeling of authenticity (being yourself) in a modern world becomes more and more difficult to find and the content of the self-discovery stories confirm this. Therefore I would like to moot the notion that a reflexive culture depends upon the assumption of emotions as arising internally thus their location in a private world is a logical presumption. A reflexive culture depends upon emotions as existing inside to be reflected upon.

It is the systematic use of this reflexivity that constructs the psychotherapeutic promise, that is a method of improving the individual's way of responding to social life, so that a positive sense of self is achieved, 'the developed self'. In this research this is achieved through the telling of self-identity stories in an alternative therapeutic group setting. In this setting each individual has the possibility of change by bringing forward an inner reflection. The framing and practice of the alternative therapy groups depend upon this reflexive self, where this self has many reference points from a vast range of knowledges. Members of the group are encouraged to recognize this internal exploration and to reflect upon their awareness of themselves in the social world. This produces a story of an inner self. "*core self*" (Tony). "*true self*" (Claudia). "*spiritual self*" (Martha). "*me inside*" (Debbie). "*feeling self*" (Dawn). "*deeper self*" (Nina). In the content of the self-discovery stories the

concepts of self find a practical realization, through self-examination and reflection upon the existence of inner emotions and feelings.

Therefore I will summarise the main points of this interpretation of the analysis before moving on to show the details of social change narrated in the alternative therapy groups and illustrated in the social theories of modernity. The research conclusions at the beginning of this chapter confirm an understanding of 'self' realised through the process of reflexivity. Awareness of an inner dialogue was promoted by the psychotherapeutic techniques demonstrated in the groups. The story telling strategies of visualising, imagining, feeling what is going on inside, all make the participant aware of an internal reflection which depends upon a inner world of emotions. By exploring theories of modernity I arrive at the supposition that modernity has developed as a reflexive culture, where a major constitutive component is the body of knowledge I defined as the psychotherapies. This psychotherapeutic influence applies reflexivity in the systematic format of self reflection and examination. In both the self-discovery stories and descriptions of modernity the problems of 'being yourself' are directly ascribed to the consequences and characteristics of modernity, which prescribe a search for an authentic sense of who they are against modern complexity. A reflexive culture places the value on pure feelings that *"in a country that most publicly celebrates the individual more people wonder privately 'What do I really feel?'"* (Hochschild 1983:189). This is the question central to the self discovery groups. The objective of the self discovery stories is to find a better sense of self, an improved notion of self identity. Therefore in modern day life once the question of reflexivity is raised there are many possibilities of how to respond to the characteristics and consequences posed in late modernity. In this interpretation, reflexivity offers the chance to reorder, reinterpret, and retell experiences.

Social change as disconnection.

To explore this I will firstly look at the social theories of modernity that suggest modern identity to be in crisis and exemplify this inner/outer theme. I will consider why the privatisation of emotions has become so central to the definition of a real, or true self and what role the psychotherapeutic influence has played in this.

The content of the self-discovery stories clearly describe aspects of modern day life that have led them to keep their feelings hidden. Modern day life is seen as external where something is missing, and the meaning of social life has been lost. This same description is shown in theories of modernity by the exploration of faith, consumption and relationships in modern day life (Berman 1992, Giddens 1991, Lasch 1979).

The theme of disconnection between the individual and society is echoed in the self-discovery stories and resonates with a particular type of social theory from America. Authors such as Bellah, (1985, 1991) Sennet (1977) and Lasch (1977, 1979, 1985), suggest that modern day life is harsh, hence the individual retreats into a privatised life where s/he feels a more secure sense of connection. This is seen in the works of American historian, Christopher Lasch, epitomised by the titles of "The Culture of Narcissism" (1979), "The Minimal Self, Psychic Survival in Troubled Times" (1985), and where family life becomes a "Haven in a Heartless World" (1977). This identification of a particular historical period is circumscribed by the idea that the continued accelerating pace of social change results in the retreat of the individual into a privatised world.

Lasch argues that the role of the psychotherapies in the understanding of this privatised world develops a culture of narcissism. The culture of narcissism implies a modern autonomous individual, where the conformation of self identity is through self development located from an internal source, with no established patterns in social organisation. Therefore Lasch argues that there is a continuous withdrawal and retreat from social and communal life towards a narcissistic self. Christopher Lasch argues that, as the expression of being yourself is withdrawn from the outside social world, this individual expression becomes a preoccupation with the understanding of a psychotherapeutic 'self'. The psychotherapeutic promise of a developed self becomes the central feature through which any experiences of life can be described. This is illustrated in the field work by the transformation of life events that may be disappointing or painful into opportunities for personal growth. As one facilitator commented jokingly, when answering the phone to a person in an emotional crisis, "*Not another personal growth opportunity*". Lasch argues that this understanding of personal growth is detrimental to social, communal life. Lasch describes a

therapeutic culture as narcissistic. Here narcissism, perceived to be a selfish form of self love, is combined with the idea that this culture also involves a change in faith that becomes superficial. This superficiality or lack of faith becomes the faith in the self associated with negative social changes such as, materialism and secularisation, divorce and unstable intimate relationships.

Change of faith.

In Chapter One I reviewed the understanding that the psychotherapies had taken over a moral foundation from Christian theology and practices. Lasch argues that the loss of moral meaning from modern social life is exacerbated by the role of the psychotherapies as he perceives this influence to be too superficial and individualised in a selfish and a socially withdrawn form of understanding.

This period of late modernity is also described as a time where the secularisation of beliefs and practices has continued (Berger et al 1973). This can be supported by the proposed decline in the structural role of the church in creating social order and social control and the lessening influence of Christianity in moral development. Consequently secularisation can be seen as faith that is no longer socially given by the overarching meanings prescribed by the institutions of the Christian church. Faith has become a matter of individual achievement (Berger et al 1973). In Chapter One I also proposed that there is and has been a very close relationship between the spiritual moral message of Christianity and the rise of therapeutic practice where both perceive the self as a truth to be examined. Foucault identifies the historical production of this moral self such that, *"the Christian hermeneutics of self with its deciphering of inner thoughts implies that there is something hidden in ourselves"*, and the growth of psychotherapy depends upon such a belief (1988:46).

A frequent description of social life presented in the self-discovery stories expressed the feeling that something was missing. This is highlighted in Chapter Five in terms of the reasons the participants gave in answer to why they attended the groups. The search for such groups is informed by a wish to be more certain of a sense of meaning in life. There is mention of the need for this meaning of life to be more secure, real and truthful, and the promise of the inner self is that this can be found inside. Some stories of the facilitators, Tony, Pat, Michael, Jill, actually refer

to how their search for spiritual meanings was not found in the social practices of the Christian Church in this country. “ *The institution of the church and the roman catholic culture ripped away my religion my sense of the holy within*” (Tony). “*Messages are distorted by the Western Church*” (Patricia). Here this theme of something missing is closely associated with the late modernity theme of increasing secularisation within the institutions of Christian social practices (Dobbelaere 1984). The spiritual, moral message, particularly observed in the psychotherapies found in this alternative setting, (as in Jung’s “Modern Man in search of his Soul” (1984),) emphasise that something is missing in modern life and that it can be found in the realisation of the self, where true potential and understanding is located. Marshall Berman (1970) also expresses a similar sentiment in his explorations of modernity that result in a search for authenticity.

DeYoung has devised an illustrative table to show how characteristics of a religious faith, such as a known messiah, a gospel and scriptures, can be transferred to different psychotherapeutic approaches (1976:90). Here psychotherapeutic ideology can be viewed as a form of neomysticism prioritising an inverted transcendence where the real self is discovered deep within and not in heaven (North 1965). The facilitators’ stories illustrate the strong spiritual component to encourage the belief in an inner self as the realisation of the god within. This inner experience of spirituality is described as ‘*touching god*’ (Tony), ‘*sense of peace*’ (Claudia) and ‘*the process of life*’ (Chris), which enables you to become your own priest or priestess, your own healer, your own counsellor. Thus spirituality is a form of inner potential seen in terms of experiential knowledge. The uncovering of experiential knowledge from the location of an inner self is said to be the discovery of a “*pure knowledge*” (Jen), and “*true wisdom*” (Michael). As DeYoung argues, this inner guidance of morality through the discovery of an inner self involves an, “*unknown god made known*” (1976).

The description of a narcissistic culture proposed by Christopher Lasch is presented as a changing faith. Lasch describes the new focus of personal growth, found in the therapy promise, as a superficial concern, as it is based on the insecurity of not knowing what the future holds for the next generation, “*the faith of those without faith*” (1979:51). It follows here that faith is a concept that can be

transferred to different bodies of knowledge at different historical times. If the proposed triumph of the therapeutic does prevail in late modernity social life may indeed become the giving and receiving of therapy as predicted by Illich (1975). This is certainly the aim of re-evaluation co-counselling where each person is able to become a counsellor, and central to Louise Hay's work where the self help component promises each person the ability to become their own therapist. The whole presentation of experiential knowledge suggests that we are all in charge of our own understanding.

I conclude my research supports the theoretical arguments which propose that spiritual and moral themes have shifted from the centralised, organised, orthodox social practices of Christian religion in Western culture to be understood in relation to a proliferation of practices that encourage faith. However, in contrast to the debate that primarily focuses upon the decline of the church, empirical research has also highlighted how the diversity of faith has always prevailed (McLouglin 1978), illustrated by recent explorations into the development of new groups of believers sometimes called cults (Wallis 1984), and the role that charismatic leadership plays in creating converts (Robbins 1987). The alternative therapy groups can certainly be described as creating new groups of believers through the shared story of self-discovery. The role of the facilitator is demonstrated throughout the analysis to be a key factor in the evolution, membership and presentation of the self-discovery groups. What is important to note in the self-discovery stories is that faith has been invested into the psychotherapeutic social practices. Lasch clearly identifies this 'superficial' privatised area of faith as located in modern day understandings of health and well-being:

"As the world takes on a more menacing appearance, life becomes a never ending search for health and well being through exercise, dieting, drugs, spiritual regimes of various kinds, psychic self help and psychiatry. From those who have withdrawn interest from the outside world except in so far as it remains a source of gratification and frustration, the state of their own health becomes an all absorbing concern" (1979:140).

Frustration at the outside world is indeed expressed in the research stories and an explanation of an inner search for some sort of meaning is the story of self-discovery. The idea that this meaning is achieved through an understanding of health and well-being is supported by my document analysis that looks at the networks of

alternative health and the mix and match of knowledge that underpins and links together notions of health, healing, personal growth and human potential.

In Chapter One, I illustrated the understanding of health and its relationship to therapeutic practice. I suggested that the notions of self development as a personal resource has taken a dominant position by certain social groups in the understanding of a sense of well-being during this period of late modernity. The dominance of self development as a resource achieved through the psychotherapies can be explored through many avenues: the growth of medical discourses and the universal accessibility of medical practice (Foucault 1975), the recognition of psychological and social factors within this medical model of defining health and illness (Armstrong 1987), the increasing popularity and accessibility of psychology (Gergen 1991), the impact of psychological developmental theories that construct an influential body of knowledge on how everybody should develop and mature, the developmental stages of psychoanalysis where conflicts at certain points can be resolved (Craib 1987 1992), the successful marketing of various psychoanalytical theories and humanistic psychology in the generalised use of the psychotherapies and counselling, which propose self development as an individual that achieves the highest stage of maturity (North 1965). Thus the influence of a psychotherapeutic ideology for certain groups is very prevalent. Some social theorists such as Illich and Reiff predicted an extreme outcome of this professional understanding of therapy in the descriptions of social life as therapeutic relationships (1976) and the “triumph of the therapeutic” (1966) that creates a ‘private identity market’ (Berger 1965). The psychotherapeutic privatisation of identity has therefore reproduced the belief in the ‘real me’ located in a private inner space.

This is supported further by studies that have looked at the growth of psychotherapeutic influence in America illustrated by the messages of personal growth and the self help movement. Edwin Schur (1976) named this psychotherapeutic influence as ‘the awareness craze’ where personal growth was linked to social progress. The message of awareness has three important components: learning to feel your feelings through bodywork and the freeing of emotions, the experience of feeling these emotions that promotes breaking away from emotional routinization, and learning to be real through the emphasis upon

positive thinking and self responsibility. These three components are all illustrated in the practices and theories of the self discovery groups in this research. Wendy Kaminer (1992) explored the increase of self help books marketed in America. In her examination of the recovery movement she argued that this movement depended upon the counselling concept of 'co-dependency'. This concept, originally used to explore the relationships of women with alcoholic husbands, was now being used in the self help doctrine to explain many types of behaviour identified as addictive, such as shopping, sex, and eating. Her study illustrates the same messages made in Schur's 'awareness craze'. Thus even though the self help movement focused upon recovery the meaning of healing was made directly through emotional expression and positive thinking. The 'real me' is given increasing significance through the framing and social practice of health and as shown in this research through the increasing importance and accessibility of alternative health. This sense of well-being can also be shown as the inner location of emotions.

This is not to say that other ways of knowing this sense of well-being do not exist, but that the developing structures of the psychotherapies construct an increasing significance and accessibility of the practices of self examination and self reflection, focused upon a container of emotions, 'the self'. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by this research, the members of the therapy groups are predominantly white and middle class, especially through the criteria of higher education. The accessibility and significance of psychotherapy may be limited to this group at present as social research continues to contradict such broad generalisations, for example specific class and cultural understandings of health and illness demonstrate how lay beliefs have not been overwhelmed by the professionalisation of health care (Blaxter 1990, Cornwell 1984, Helman 1985). I suggest that the influence of psychotherapy has been most absorbed through education into the white, middle class, professionalised culture, where an expression of individuality is defined as a personal resource, promised and clarified by therapeutic practice.

Continuing the argument that a sense of individual authenticity has been privatised into a frame of health and well-being, I also suggest the corresponding development of social practices. The moral expertise of the priest has changed to the medical practitioner, whose expertise is now diffused further by the proliferation of

therapists. The facilitators' proclamations for a better world that requires individual responsibility for its achievement, particularly illustrates a moral theme in the self-discovery stories. This moral message is also found in the medical world: Balint first identified the apostolic function of the general practitioner (1964), while Bull (1990) describes a new moral medical code of health responsibility that can be observed in the psychotherapeutic practice explored here.

Life style and Consumption.

In the theme of disconnection the self-discovery stories criticise a materialistic social world as one that provides false comfort, which hides or represses the realisation of a true self. The distinction between the experience of different selves is essential to the self-discovery story told in the research. The theme of a '*materialistic self*' in contrast to a more '*spiritual self*' (Claudia) is central to the facilitators' stories and echoed by the participants. In agreement with the self-discovery stories, this notion of a core self that may become more real is described by Giddens as '*the genuine development*' that is obscured and falsely expressed by consumption, presenting once again the idea that the expression of individuality is problematic in a modern, materialistic social world.

"The consumption of ever novel goods becomes in some part a substitute for the genuine development of self. Appearance replaces essences as the visible signs of successful consumption come to outweigh the use values of the goods and services in question" (1992:198).

The concept of life style in sociology has been used from its initial elucidation by Weber to describe a coherent association between particular actions and events that are engaged by certain groups of individuals. Latterly, theories of consumption patterns frequently involve descriptions of life style, defined as a set of social practices linked with a particular sequence of actions and acquisitions (Giddens 1992, Blaxter 1990). For example a healthy lifestyle becomes eating well, exercising regularly and valuing the image of fitness. There are certain social practices that promise this healthy life style and such practices are very likely to be presented in a consumer market, such as the advent of "step" aerobics, which warrants the advertising and production of marketable items. A life style does not necessarily

have to become a pattern of consumption, as observed with the values placed in a “green” environmental life style, however it is difficult to place any understanding of life style outside of the market. Thus, a “green” life style may imply organic vegetables and recycling policies that presume the associated consumption patterns. The important aspect of this concept of life style is that it does provide a coherent connection between a selection of activities and this coherence and connection does imply a more securer sense of purpose. Therefore the adoption of a particular life style promotes a specific identity by which to develop a unified and connected life story.

Anthony Giddens in his discussion of self-identity argues that the description of life style as an associated set of practices describe a plurality of options available to many people in late modernity, and it is these options that inform self awareness. *“Life style choices constitute reflexive narratives of self”* (1994:75). Therefore the notion of following a life style is important to bring some sense of connection and unity, upon which the individual may reflect. If this is brought into the understanding of telling stories and social life, life styles can be seen as providing a major theme to select and organise the episodes of the story. For instance, within this late modernity story, life style is a powerful image that has become the focus of attention for health information. Recent health education policy decisions are based upon this concept of life style (Blaxter 1990). I suggest here that the alternative settings of health and education discussed in Chapter Six, formulate a distinct life style approach. The framing and social practices, illustrated by the analysis of advertisements and the development of an alternative culture of positive change, promise an improvement to one’s quality of life if they are followed. In this alternative setting, frequent recommendations for diet, exercise, creativity and self-discovery are made. This is the fundamental underpinning of the healing and personal growth message that is told within the research groups. The understanding of life style and being responsible for your health, fit very well together, as they both depend upon individuals being in a position of being able to select and follow certain options in their lives. Crawford (1980) refers to this particular development of a healthy life style as developing an individualised culture of healthism. The therapeutic practices I have identified are one such option of a commodified life style in late modernity. Hence this

commodification of the self described as a "*new supermarket of the self*" (Cohen & Taylor 1992: 232) has developed from the marketing of the "*California self*" (Foucault 1988). Rosalind Coward highlights the attraction of the "*consciousness industries*" that employ the powerful images of nature and natural to underpin the presentation in alternative health (1989).

Self-discovery is told as a path or journey in the research stories. This path is often described as leading onto to other groups, with each one progressing the realisations of this inner self. The wider setting of various therapies and courses in this alternative area show how such courses are advertised and promoted to provide this sense of a life style where each aspect of the self discovery path is connected and unified under it's ultimate objective. The connection and the association of these alternative practices are observed in the networking of introductions and information exchange.

Yet, while self-discovery may be perceived as a possible lifestyle option, the description of an area of consumption is not sustained by the content of the stories of those involved in this research. An important characteristic of this alternative setting is that it is seen as an area to move away from consumption, to look for something else, some other meanings from social life. It is also perceived to be an area for co-operation and sharing above the values of competition. The alternative therapy groups were seen as a safe haven away from patterns of consumption. Two of the research groups practised methods of making the group accessible for everyone such as sliding scales or voluntary payments. Many of the health and personal growth centres described in Chapter Six operated a charitable fund to enable people with low incomes to benefit from this alternative presentation of health. All the facilitators believed that money was not a barrier to enter this alternative field of self-discovery and yet it is also their business, their livelihood from which they need to generate an income. In this research, the other group members (like myself) can be located as white and middle class, although this location of self-discovery in an alternative setting certainly provides a cheaper alternative to many psychotherapies and counselling found in more formal settings. As a single parent myself earning ten thousand pounds a year, I could not enter the expensive range that some

psychotherapeutic practices exhibit. The alternative setting of the groups and the ideals of accessibility did offer a cheaper market place.

I now move from the discussion of social change characterised by a lack of faith or changing faith, and the increasing consumption of life style options, to the discussion of late modernity and relationships.

Problematic Relationships.

In the self-discovery stories relationships were described as the possibility of experiencing intimacy and sharing that is 'being real' with another person. In the analysis I have identified how the facilitators' and the participants' stories all mention the problems of developing such intimate relationships. Sometimes this forms the major theme of the story, while in others it is presented in the minor key, but understanding relationships is considered central to the psychotherapeutic framing of finding out about yourself. The focus upon relationships is illustrated by the work of the facilitators, Peter and Jill, where the concept of understanding yourself is linked clearly with the feeling of love and developing a satisfying relationship. This concern with intimacy or being real in relationships is echoed in the social practices of the groups where the importance of creating a close and cohesive group is shown. The understanding and expression of intimacy, shown in the groups through the sharing of emotions, is argued to be essential for all self-discovery in this research. In contrast, to the discovery of an inner self composed of love, intimacy and truth, the social world is perceived to be harmful to these feelings. *"Living a life that was always pushing down the emotions"* (Lesley). *"My thinking self which always squashes down my emotions"* (Dawn). *"These feelings that people hide from"* (Margaret). *"Not being real with each other"* (Dave).

Social change in late modernity is associated with increasing risks to the stability of such relationships and correspondingly the ability to have a safe area for sharing emotions becomes harder to achieve. Social statistics on divorce and adultery, the media attention to gay and lesbian relationships, all question the ideal notions of romantic, monogamous, heterosexual love. Foucault's theories of repressed sexuality, where sexuality remained unheard except in relation to the explanation of abnormal behaviour, has now developed through a therapeutic

expressive culture into a proliferation of where and how sexual stories can be told (Plummer 1995). The focus upon relationships is central to the development of a therapeutic culture. However, the increasing freedom and choice now perceived in the possibility of intimate relationships have led to the corresponding idea of unstable and difficult relationships.

Late modernity is characterised by the idea of a “pure relationship”, a social relation for its own sake (Giddens 1991, 1994). The origins of a pure relationship found in romantic love are now transformed into a confluent love, where reciprocal sexual pleasure, emotional equality, and homosexual love is increasingly accepted. Therefore Giddens proposes that an intimate relationship is negotiated for itself between the two parties involved. The connection of the psychotherapies with this understanding of confluent love is essential. The psychotherapeutic message of relationships as a “mirror to the self” informs how you can see yourself in the other person. A developed self is therefore someone who is able to give this emotional equality, provide sexual pleasure and be true to their own feelings of sexuality. Lasch presents a negative interpretation of this pure relationship. He sees the narcissistic emphasis found in the therapeutic culture developing a type of intimacy primarily concerned with self gratification. Lasch describes the therapeutic pattern of relationships as the development of brief, superficial relationships where commitment becomes the meeting of your own needs.

The stories of the facilitators and the participants agree that meaningful relationships are difficult to initiate and maintain, but they suggest that a key benefit from discovering an inner self is a change in the ability to relate. The content of the self-discovery stories constantly illustrate the importance placed on intimacy, the desire to develop a special relationship. This was frequently narrated in association with the other members of the group, irrespective of whether the group permitted or encouraged the development of such relationships as shown in the story of Anton. Anton’s search for a meaningful relationship brought him into conflict with the rules of Co-counselling. The seed group fostered the development of many intimate relationships. This transference of the need for relationships onto other group members could be understood by Lasch’s critique of encouraging brief relationships, however the understanding of all these relationships in the group setting was seen as

learning experiences not as narcissistic, self gratification. The self-discovery message is that such relationships are all part of learning about yourself. As Peter and Jill state in their interview, *"relationships are the mirror to the self"*.

Here, I introduce a recent inquiry into relationships between couples and within families, which demonstrates a new understanding of gender reflecting the same psychotherapeutic emphasis upon the centrality of the self. It also explores the centrality of the modernity theme to promote a particular form of self development that has been colonised by the psychotherapeutic terms such as self realisation and self actualisation. The study by Francesca M. Cancian (1987) illustrates how this connection of love and self-discovery reflects a fundamental change in understanding gender. During the nineteenth century love became associated with the feminine, while self development was judged by characteristics perceived to be masculine. This construction of love and gender became the feminized "blueprints" for the relationships of duty and companionship that Cancian describes. The stereotypical gender roles of the male worker and the female housewife reflected the characteristics ascribed to being a man and a woman. Cancian then argues that the strong influence of the women's movement from the 1970's changed the understanding of how men and women could relate intimately, therefore incorporating the feminist challenge to the attributes associated with being a man or woman. This understanding was shifting towards the belief in androgyny, in which men and women could be seen as having a variety of masculine and feminine characteristics within each individual. Therefore self development was a possibility for women too, and intimacy involved an independent relationship, where both women and men shared the work and domestic sphere. This independent blueprint was described as being more prone to conflict within couples as each person sought to meet their own needs. Cancian shows how this conflict around independence led to the blueprint of interdependence, where the recognition of give and take, and mutual support enters the relationship for both members. In this stage of interdependence men and women can both express caring emotions, be sensitive and both offer supporting roles, thus the notion of androgyny is put into practice.

This research on relationships suggests an interesting dynamic that the proposed

therapeutic culture has played in late modernity, where the self becomes central and the application of reflexivity is organised to understand social life. I would question Cancian's proposed shift in understanding from gender roles to the androgynous self as many other studies illustrate how certain areas remain strongly gendered. In feminist explorations of how labour is divided in the home domestic work is still seen as being the responsibility of women. It is also argued that women take the responsibility for the management of emotions in the private sphere (Duncome and Marsden 1993). From the research groups I suggest that the notion of self development has become 'emotionalised'. I mean by this that the psychotherapeutic foundation of self development, where emotional expression is positively encouraged, has legitimated feelings within a specific area for both men and women. Yet this occurs without challenging the central notion of an essential core of sexual identity.

One of the key frames used in the self-discovery groups, irrespective of the gender mix or not is to show how the experience of intimacy may be positive. This positive, optimistic message is supported by the discovery of the masculine and feminine within each person. The stories of self-discovery give a definite way of understanding the terms of masculine and feminine. Developed from Eastern philosophies, especially Buddhism and the Chinese understanding of yin and yan, this understanding exists in the concept of balance in all living things. Similarly, Jungian psychology presents each individual as a balance between the masculine and feminine components. Hence in this alternative setting, gender is perceived as an individual expression, something essential. Part of the self-discovery story is to discover the real essential woman or man within you that contains a masculine and feminine aspect in each, away from the social construction of gender. This is especially illustrated by the WISE group, and the work of Chris that focuses upon men and nature.

In Griffiths' (1995) discussion of feminisms and concepts of self she shows how feminist theories have continued the identification of an inner emotional world. Radical feminism clearly emphasise the dichotomy between emotions and reason, where women are located within the emotional model and social change needs to raise the social standing of emotions feelings and instincts. A general overview of

feminist theories illustrates the agreed depth and complexity of gender identity while still maintaining varying notions between the two distinct poles of the essential female and the androgynous being. The understanding of gender found in the alternative therapy groups continues this model of an essential woman and man. However the objective is for each individual to discover their own femininity and masculinity within each essentially constructed identity. Thus you can be a 'real man' with emotions or a 'real woman' with reason. All the participants were heterosexual and the only reference to the possibility of other sexual identities was made in the story from Mary who has a much stronger sense of feminism and political identity in her story prior to the attendance at the RC group. The alternative therapy emphasis upon fulfilment through a meaningful relationship illustrated in the type of therapy Jill and Peter offer, and the way that the facilitators work in a male and female partnership all emphasise the normative standard of heterosexuality in this therapeutic model. Hence, while this therapy understanding of the essential characteristics of being a woman are exemplified, the political position that such an identity holds remains an inner resource and not a social challenge.

By looking at the centrality of the self in understanding modern relationships I argue that Lasch's account of a therapeutic culture that has enabled the individual to withdraw from the social world, because of perceived risks from increasing social change, presents a very simplistic explanation of cause and effect. If, as Lasch argues, the social world becomes more difficult and solace and withdrawal is found in therapy, why do the self-discovery stories tell of the positive benefits of change on a social and individual level and why do they acknowledge this learning as a difficult painful process. No story told implies that a person on a self-discovery journey will be happy and content. The positive promise of improved well-being is made concrete by continually looking at experiences and how to change them. The term "work" is found in this alternative therapy field to describe the area where you go to work on yourself. Therefore the focus of the self in this therapeutic culture involves working at understanding this self. Cancian's conclusion supports this: no longer can a relationship of duty and tradition be taken for granted, but we have to work at the relationship at all times to achieve a successful sense of intimacy. Cancian argues that this shift in understanding is from the identification of the self. This self is also

at the heart of a therapeutic culture. This therapeutic culture presents the view that this self can be constructed reflexively. In 'The Transformation of Intimacy', Giddens summarises this as the constant exploration of past, present and future where the self is a "*proliferation of reflexive resources*" (1994: 30). Therefore it appears that relationships have become part of this reflexive resource.

Ways of Knowing

The lay reception of knowledge.

In this way the psychotherapies are argued to produce a positive sense of a reflexive culture. Here autonomy and responsibility are encouraged. Therefore the psychotherapies are seen as a positive response to the contradictions inherent in modern day life. Here the characteristics of late modernity show how the development of psychotherapies in this alternative setting respond to create a secure area to retell life stories, thus seeking a more secure sense of self-identity. It gives a definite space and time for the individual to become autobiographical, the possibility of telling your story with a guaranteed listener. Thus the alternative therapy groups reconstructed self-identity stories are perceived to be in direct response to the characteristics of late modernity, where it is harder to create a unified and connected life story and achieve a positive sense of individuality. The self-discovery stories, enable the individual to respond to this reflexive decision making process with a sense of positive change. It asserts the possibility of options and decision making where previously there only seemed to be constraint. "*The negatives turn to positives*" (Dave). "*It's like reinventing yourself*" (Dawn). "*It's like growing, like bits that have been cut off and stopped growing are looked at. I could try this is now transformed to I could do that*" (Lesley). The notion of self-discovery is therefore a positive reclamation of individuality and autonomy. The reflexive ordering of narratives of the self-discovery story enables the possibility of becoming your own biographer.

Within the alternative therapy frame presented here this biography can encompass numerous frames of reference of a very general type and be brought into your own particular story through the emphasis upon experience. Therefore this

brings me to suggest that the self-discovery story is an enabling process. It places the possibility of options into the story. Anthony Giddens suggests that the popularity of health practices permits the individual to engage with the structures of society in an active positive way. Giddens describes how a positive sense of control over life events is promoted through this growing area of health and well being.

"Is the search for self identity a form of somewhat pathetic narcissism, or is it, in some part at least, a subversive force in respect of modern institutions? The benefits of exercise and dieting are not personal discoveries, but come from the lay reception of expert knowledge, as does the appeal of therapy or psychiatry. The spiritual regimens in question may be an eclectic assemblage, but includes religions and cults from all around the world vastly more extensive in character than anyone would have contact with in the pre-modern era". (1990:123).

This positive sense of control, Giddens suggests, arises because this period of late modernity has changed and challenged the way that knowledge is received and used. This lay reception of knowledge involves the reflexive ordering of knowledge received from the experts. This is demonstrated in the alternative therapy groups where the importance of experience is stressed in the process of story telling. A central component of the self-discovery story is the idea that you know best and expert guidance is given to enable the story teller to discover what s/he knows best. This is particularly illustrated in Claudia's definition of a facilitator as someone, "who lays the framework". The "lay reception" of knowledge confirms the story selected and gathered from the many different kinds of knowledge, more available than in other historical periods, and also acknowledges the possibility of making your own history. Authorial freedom is promoted. The characteristics of modernity facilitates this easy reception of knowledge through the growing development of the media and published material.

A therapeutic cultural response to social change.

Hence, I have illustrated how the self-discovery story presents an awareness of social change and loss of meaning in modern social life, while offering an authorial freedom in how to change these risks. Therefore the growth and influence of the psychotherapies as the continued construction of a privatised identity area can be understood in terms of modernity as: it ameliorates the harshness of a technized society, it reduces tensions and resentments, it appeals to the residues of a Judeo-Christian ethic, it encourages faith in a techniques and reconciles the individual to

society through the belief in their own existence (North 1965:288). The active construction of knowledge is used for each participant to become the ultimate creator of their individuality, through the telling of their life stories with the focus upon understanding an inner self. My sense of this shift in the explanation becomes expressed by the statement "It's not what I do, but the way that I feel it". In response to the problem, proposed by Lasch, that the therapeutic influence in late modernity is a superficial, narcissistic faith in response to a harsh external world, the question remains whether this psychotherapeutic faith has exacerbated the decrease in a sense of communal moral concern. The self-discovery stories illustrate how this therapeutic faith has been individualised into the life stories of the participants. If the purpose of creating a unified story giving a sense of connection to others is essential for a sense of self-identity to exist then this psychotherapeutic faith is very successful. The participants define this therapeutic influence as a positive hope for social change as well as individual change. The participants describe how the groups have made them more aware of important meanings in their life. These meanings do not support that this understanding is any less communal and exhibit a strong moral foundation in the search for a positive sense of interpreting their lives.

Modernism expressed in cultural terms can be defined as the development of the self and society from political discourses focusing upon a democratic solution and emphasising economic growth and continued modernisation (Friedman 1992:360). This can be seen as providing a social, external, outer location for the subjective experiences of identity. As this has changed and people have found "something missing" from this identity a new search has been undertaken in a post modern position. On the one hand this has resulted in an consumptionist, narcissitic dependency on the commodification of the self, while at the same time trying to return to a traditional sense of roots, of nature and/or a religious solution to the failure of the modern identity. These themes are certainly illustrated by the alternative therapy groups. Therefore the crisis of a modern identity is overcome by engaging in a identity that is fixed irrespective of social changes. This fixed identity is achieved by transforming social change into individualised growth experiences.

Put another way, in relation to the telling of life stories, the need for life stories to achieve unity and connectedness, identified by MacIntyre and Ricoeur (1985,

1992), in order for the individual to gain a positive sense of having a good life thus confirming a stronger sense of self is proposed as being harder to accomplish against the increasing fragmentation of life worlds. Therefore the unity and connectedness needs to come from reference points other than the social milieu, which is constantly changing. These other reference points return to ideas of naturalism and a religious sense of spirituality made accessible through the many knowledges available in this alternative setting.

A challenge to dominant stories?

This discussion of knowledge leads me into another aspect that postmodernity themes present in our academic discourse. The lay reception of knowledge and the accessibility of this knowledge described as a feature of late modernity, is the same feature that a post-modern story can use to show how the social processes that accept knowledge are changing and breaking down to such an extent that new systems evolve. This can be illustrated by the development of the facilitators outside of formalised health care and professional boundaries. In this post-modern discussion I can refer to the breakdown of metanarratives, although I prefer to use the descriptive term of dominant stories. These dominant stories are being fragmented by numerous other stories. For instance, in the first part of this chapter, I discussed the possibilities of many new faiths that have shifted from a culture of a centralised faith such as Christianity. I argued that this faith and the creation of a moral order has been transferred to different bodies of knowledge such as medicine and in particular the psychotherapies. I suggest that the development of the alternative movement in western culture enables a continuous proliferation of areas and beliefs in which individuals may locate their faith. For example, the alternative health setting identified in Chapter Six illustrates the many different frames for understanding health, and the value of self examination developed by the psychotherapies. The association of the term well-being expands yet again, to incorporate the influence of these many other stories.

This corresponds to the postmodernity debate where change in informing and accepting knowledge becomes a new way of seeing the world, a new way to tell your story. The format of the groups, although variable in their methods, enabled the

participant to discover her or his inner self from the eclectic dissemination of knowledge associated with this alternative field. This permits many ways of telling your story from the range of stories heard. The facilitators take a key role in adapting these wider stories into new versions. They select parts of mysticism, Jungism, or ecology stories to keep defining the understanding of their own experience. It is their own experience that takes precedence in the retelling. The story of self discovery is therefore how the individual gains the authority to become their own author and retell their autobiography. From the setting of these alternative therapy groups, many examples of the experiential claim to knowledge can be illustrated. It is this experiential base that forms the credentials on which the facilitator or experienced participant is considered. There are no formalised rules of testing or assessing. The use of different knowledge to inform your story is undertaken in connection with your own understanding of your experiences. Hence a complex interactive relationship exists between the wider stories and personal stories of self discovery. This reconstruction of knowledge is captured by the statement from Smart's discussion of postmodernity, where the acceptance of knowledge and the process through which it receives its status is seen as a form of heresy. Heresy is defined as a direct opposition to the acceptance processes that operated in modernity. *"It is in this context that heresy has become virtually a universal condition and that plausibility structures have become increasingly particularistic and open to challenge"*(Smart 1993:126).

The postmodernity frame highlights the paradox of growing similarities through our global relationships alongside a corresponding growth of diversity. Perhaps in this world of numerous and infinite connections, difference becomes a more definite way to assert any sense of individuality. In contrast to the proposition of a problematic modern identity where the role of the psychotherapies can be viewed as a means to creating a unified and connected life story, the postmodern frame tells of how the process of self-discovery is the recognition of multiple selves in dialogue, where the possibility of being your own author with infinite stories is stressed. Many of the self-discovery stories also reflect this postmodern theme, where the sense of a coherent connected story is important for the location of a

distinct inner self, but the infinite possibility of experiential knowledge is also a means to constantly "*reinvent yourself*" (Dawn).

This exploration of the lay reception of knowledge and the notion of heresy illustrates the growing paradox that arises from the content of the self-discovery stories. Why does this authorial freedom, this infinite possibility of experiential knowledge present as a distinct script?

So far this explanation of the role of psychotherapy in association with social change has been blind to issues of power as the concrete social relations that form everyday life have been removed from the content of the story. The location of emotions in an inner self presumes that they exist to be uncovered and that they are hidden or repressed in social life. When a different model of emotions is raised new questions can be formed concerning: who uncovers such emotions, how are they uncovered, what is named and what is left unnamed, what is judged to be true, and how is this internal negotiation of emotional meanings governed. Therefore chapter eight presents a very different interpretation of the analysis. This demonstrates a fundamental difference to the self-discovery story collected as a transcribed interview and the actual research participation in the field itself. It is my participation and the analysis of the field notes that reveal the social processes of story telling. These processes show why such a story can become apolitical.

Chapter Eight.

The Nature of the Story.

The sociology of stories¹ is an analysis beyond the content of the story. The many features of how stories are produced and consumed highlights the social relations from which such stories occur. In the present research story the production and consumption of the stories in the alternative therapy groups has been discussed at all the stages of analysis. The initial production of the facilitators' stories in the interview setting demonstrates a clear mix and match of knowledge and how this is incorporated into their own personal experiential frame of reference. This outlines the following consumption of the self-discovery stories promoted by the group strategies of initiating, vocalising and announcing stories to others. The final production of this story, shown in the participants' interviews, demonstrates how the major themes of inner/outer, connection/disconnection, are reiterated and reproduced to define an inner self, and assimilated into their own experiences. Thus the similarity of this production needs to be explored by the strategies of story telling used in the groups to show how the self-discovery story consumed as an individual story eventually becomes a public, shared story. This creation of a public story is supported by the evolving cohesion and close relationships developed by the members. The production and consumption of these self-discovery themes associated with this experience of an inner self are also illustrated in the wider setting of similar groups and venues to exhibit an overarching network of meanings. Therefore while it has been an important exercise to explore the content of the self-discovery stories in relation to theories of modernity, as the story distinctly revealed a clear view of modern day social life, this content cannot be taken away from the production and consumption of such a story. This begins to reveal that this alternative

¹ This term is taken from Ken Plummer's work (1995), explored further in relation to this study in Chapter Two.

psychotherapeutic story presents a distinct script that is taught and the success of this teaching depends upon the social relationships of story telling.

Therefore this chapter begins by raising a different model of locating reflexivity. Here the interactionist emphasis is upon the networks of social relations and perceives the psychotherapeutic message for emotional expression as a distinct social sign in this network. There are two ways that this self-discovery story can be shown to illustrate the generic social process of story telling and reconstructing meanings. Firstly the strategies of story telling promoted by the groups reveal a distinct power network where this understanding of an inner self is governed. Here Foucault's concept of the confessional provides a heuristic device to explore how such a power relationship was observed in the research groups (Foucault 1988, Rose 1991). Secondly the narrative organisation of this story reveals many similarities with the way people are taught to deal with a number of painful or difficult life events. This narrative organisation is illustrated by Dave's comment 'the negatives turn to positives'. This reconstruction of individual life stories occurs through a complex network of social relations. Therefore this chapter moves from the content of the stories to show how the organisation of interaction constructs a specific type of story told. This governance and organisation of social relations in the narrative, what story is told and how the story is told, reveals a distinct script to show the psychotherapeutic influence in modernity as a key area of emotional management.

Self Identity and Social Relations.

Reflexivity rooted in social relations.

In the last chapter my interpretation of the analysis demonstrated how the psychotherapeutic understanding of self-identity was central to explanations of modernity. As 'knowing yourself' has become an integral constituent of modern day reflexivity, the psychotherapeutic influence has organised this reflexivity into a systematic body of knowledge, where self development is now closely associated with self examination and self awareness. I argued that this understanding of

reflexivity depended upon the assumption of inner emotions that arise in response to the external world and therefore become an indicator of the experiences of each persons inner world. This understanding of reflexivity is given support from the philosophical position I raised in Chapter One that proposed we all need to create life stories to give a sense of who we are, how we came, and where we are going.

The other side of the coin is that no life story could exist without relationships. 'The Other' is a necessary prerequisite for any sense of individuality, how else would any person be able to measure or formulate any ideas about themselves. It serves no purpose to tell stories about yourself if there is no one to listen or to be a part of the story. This relational aspect of 'the other' is central both the interactionist and psychoanalytical models of self identity, but I now argue that how this relational constituent is used in the formation of a reflexive awareness is constructed in different ways.

In the psychotherapeutic model reflexivity confirms an internal base for the location and residence of emotions that arise spontaneously often in contradiction with the social context. This denies the social relational aspect central to any understanding of a therapeutic relationship. If emotions are understood from a framework of social relations another way of appreciating self identity is revealed and reflexivity becomes a constant mediation of the material, cultural world.

In Chapter One (P.16) I briefly introduced the work of G.H. Mead that emphasises the relational aspect of how a sense of self is socially constructed. Here the reflexive nature of the self is located in the outer, external world. G.H. Mead was one of the first theorists to consider how a sense of self arises primarily from social relations. He proposed that self awareness only arises from society through the social organisation of communication. Therefore it is through language, the prime communicative interaction, that the individual comes to terms and makes sense of her/his outer world. This mediation in turn feeds back upon the individual to construct an awareness of her/himself as an individual within this complex organisation of interaction. Mead elaborated the image of the mirror where the identification of the "I" and the "Me" permits the recognition of how this inner/outer mediation constructs this sense of self by entering into a concrete objective relationship with the material, cultural world.

...self consciousness is a creation of the discourse between social selves, for it is only in communication we can begin to think of ourselves as "I" and "Me". Subjective positions can only emerge in objective social relations and activities. (Burkitt 1991:208)

In Mead's theory the emphasis is upon a dialectic relationship where consciousness is in dialogue with the experiences of the social world. For self awareness to exist individuals must place themselves constantly in the world in which they live in. From this position self identity only exists in a social space. Many theorists that have sought to develop this social foundation of self identity continue to clarify how this self identity is constantly confirmed through interactions and constructs a sense of personal space differentiated from social space. This was the major influence in Goffman's work that explored how an individual's personal sense of her or himself interacts with the social roles and expected behaviour prescribed through the order of the interaction. Another theorist who developed Goffman's two selves thesis, Rom Harre, proposed two worlds of reality, an expressive order where the individual can exert their sense of who they are and how they want to be seen alongside and in conjunction with a practical order of structured cause and effect. These ideas of two selves can be seen in direct relationship with the way that the content of the self discovery stories reveals a problematic sense of being real in the modern day world. However the added dimension to this understanding is questioning how such definitions of inner/outer arise, the psychotherapeutic promise of emotional expression can also be seen as a social relationship.

The psychoanalytical and interactionist models of self identity identify a reflexive understanding of mediating between different inner and outer worlds, also a central theme on the self-discovery stories. This mediation or reflexivity describes the processes of making sense of experiences and these experiences may be identified from many possible social or psychic worlds. Central to sociological notions of reflexivity is the understanding of an inner dialogue that depends upon concrete social relations.

For the self is a dialogue which reflects and refracts concrete social relations in which it plays a part. These dialogues are always incomplete and in a state of continuation, and the dialogical self is always an active part of these ongoing processes (Burkitt 1991:143).

This brings forward a different understanding of the social relationship of emotions that are constructed by such ongoing processes. Two important studies that illustrate this social relational location of emotions are the seminal works of Goffman (1969) and Hochschild (1983). However both studies took the existence of emotions for granted and then looked at how social rules managed and controlled their expression. Therefore within Goffman's two selves thesis, and Hochschild's empirical study in the commercialisation of feelings, the distinction between the experience of a 'real self' and an 'acted self' is confirmed. This study directly explores how this experience of 'being real' is constructed in the private emotional world made public through the impact of a therapeutic relationship.

Elias (1991) argues that the expression of emotions is not a private feeling but a whole relational component. Just as identity can only exist in a social space then emotions can only be defined within social interaction. The ability to recognise any sense of what is emotional and any sense of subjectivity is gathered through our interaction and culture. *"Emotional expression is not an outer signal of inner feelings but signs in networks of social relationships and interdependencies"* (Burkitt 1997:45). Therefore the question of the self and emotions is not just a positioning in the stories but embodied expressions of the interaction from which such stories arise. Emotions are embodied experiences governed by social practices, which constantly engage elements of power.

The shaping of knowing.

In contrast to the explanation of lay reception of knowledge and the pluralistic challenge to the structures of knowledge discussed at the end of the last chapter, the frame and social practice of self-discovery can be argued to present a specific shaping of subjectivity. In Chapter Four I explored the group processes as methods of story telling. I discussed the stages to illustrate how the self-discovery story moves from the initial stage of visualising and announcing to the telling in a community of support. It is here that I identified the importance of a Foucauldian analysis to explore the embodied, relational components of emotional expression. From this analysis the therapeutic relationship is a distinct organisation of interaction, which involves the self-disclosure of deep, hidden feelings and emotions before a witness.

This becomes an area of emotional management where feelings are named in confirmation with the listener. This is a technique of control illustrated by the concept of the confession. Firstly, I looked at the how this intimate self disclosure was encouraged by specific techniques of initiation. Secondly I described how the social relations in the groups were structured into the role of the listener, so that there was always someone else to bear witness to this intimate self disclosure. In Nikolas Rose's work (1991) the concept of the confessional is applied to the therapeutic relationship to show how this way of knowing an inner self is constructed in a power, knowledge matrix. *"In confessing one is subjectified by another"* (Rose 1991:240). This matrix can be observed through these self-disclosure techniques. The social practice of becoming a group member and sharing the characteristics of membership initiates the member into a role they are expected to perform and the corresponding story that is developed. I suggested that the experiential "pure knowledge" described has its own hierarchical structure where power is exerted through the expected interaction order of self-discovery. Therefore the initiate receives an informal training into the type of story to tell, learned from the facilitators and the more experienced participants. The confessional style of telling your story in the groups demands that the listener may pass judgement. This judgement is not an explicit expression of acceptance or rejection, but contains a subtle formation of what is expected, which is suggested to be at the heart of any therapeutic relationship, and promotes a particular construction of autobiography.

While Rose (1991) identifies the importance of this self disclosure in front of another as the therapeutic shaping of subjectivity through the practice of the confessional, he also points out another important role of self examination. In this therapeutic environment the framing and social practice prescribes what should be happening and the individual becomes subject for her or himself. That is how the act of telling about yourself becomes the individual's own method of forming themselves within this matrix of power and knowledge. Nikolas Rose argues that the therapeutic association of telling about yourself to another and becoming your own subject is the structure in which the modern self has been born, and that any concept of the self needs to account for this setting. Within this therapeutic structure the modern self has been born into an area of emotional management. If the self is the

location of inner emotions this form of self examination asks 'what do I feel?'. As Hochschild notes in her study (1983) there is a very narrow division between the question 'what do I feel?' and 'what should I feel?' In the groups emotional expression is prescribed and expected, which constructs the details of the interactive order.

From this perspective the self does not exist outside of the social setting so any dialogue that occurs within or towards another is the result of the inscription of the discourses that surround the individual. The self is shaped into existence from the framing and social practices of the alternative therapy groups. In order for the shaping of an inner self to exist here, it presumes that subjectivity, how we interpret our experiences, is the effect of power that is inscribed upon the surface. This power is located in the role of the facilitators and in becoming an object to yourself for self examination. According to this post-structural analysis, the governing of our subjectivity is a product of the new bodies of knowledge that express their expertise through the understanding of how to interpret life experiences.

The poststructural influence upon the postmodern story claims that no core self exists, the authorial role prescribed in the groups for each member to create their own self-identity stories is just a matter of learning a new script. Nicholas Fox in his postmodern social theory related to health informs us that this surface of the self is "*a body without organs*" (Fox 1993:35). This term has been used before in M. Featherstone and B.S. Turner's (1991) work on the body that discusses cultural theory in a postmodern relative stance. In this decentred postmodern world the self no longer has a clear substance, centre or depth. In contrast the body may be perceived to be the important focus, the central pivot from which the individual can organise and interpret experiences, the irreducible dimension that will always create some experience. This position found within the postmodern discussion reveals the story of self- discovery as a fictional text, one of romanticism where the self is not discovered or raised from its hidden depths because to discover the self is only to discover the inscription. Therefore the psychotherapeutic discourse provides a distinct script constructed by very clearly defined social relationships.

Self identity and social relations.

Following from this discussion of an inscribed self it presumes that identity can only exist in a social space. Therefore I need to go back and clarify the statement made in the last chapter about self and identity being interchangeable with each other as both imply a sense of individuality, an awareness of yourself. In contrast to the psychotherapeutic foundation of self, where reflexivity is an inner resource, there are many discussions of identity that confirm a more external link with a concrete framework of social relations. This is shown in the theories of: identity politics, where individual characteristics are ascribed by belonging to a certain group, sexual identity, as the construction of sexual behaviour attributed with prescribed traits, and cultural identity, conceptualised by a complex web of interrelations perceived to give some sense of belonging. The notion of identity can seek to represent the concrete social relations that constitute this awareness. I return to the complex definition of self identity that I quoted in chapter one (p:22), where identity takes into account *"the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic , cultural and gender identity"* to recognise how *"choice and limitation, agency and suffering, initiative and dependence"* become narrated into an individuals life story (Benhabib 1992:161). Therefore the exploration of identity seeks to explore the complex web of connections in interactions that cross and weave into our lives. Therefore the social processes of reflection upon interaction reveals the *"local frames of reference"* (Alexander 1992) *"the fusion of horizons"* (Widdershoven 1993) *"the web of identity"* (Griffiths 1995) *"locally validated theories"* (Morris 1994:13).

I discuss this further by showing how cultural perspectives of identity reveal a distinct sense of who you are and where you are going. Brian Morris (1994) in his anthropological perspective of the self discusses how the cultural conceptions of a person are achieved through the dominant cultural discourses. For example western philosophy from the work of Plato and continuing to Hegel and Kant expresses this self as "soul", "real being", something to aspire towards. In Eastern philosophy, the Buddhist notion of personal identity is perceived as being imaginary, false, impermanent and unstable as the objective is to achieve an altered state of consciousness that will reveal the universal aspect of the self. The Hindu beliefs

view this self as metaphysical with the distinction from a material self, such that the achievement of a true self entails detachment from the material world. In Chinese culture the influence of Taoism and Confucianism perceive self identity as a communal act where self realisation is to discover the vital rhythms of organic life, the way of nature. Cohen (1994) uses a study by Lebra, to show how the Japanese understand an inner self as morally superior to a social self. This is clearly seen in the content of the self discovery stories. These cultural discourses of self enter the frame of the alternative therapy groups and are negotiated into the understanding of personal and social lives through the mix and match and assimilation of knowledge that I have described. The concept of the confessional then actually explores how these ideas enter an individual's understanding while at the same time maintaining a firm psychotherapeutic location through the nature of the social interaction.

In contrast, Cohen (1994) shows how many cultures emphasise the relational constituents far more than the phenomenological in their conceptions of the self. In Maori culture the knowing self is perceived in relation to ancestors and kinsfolk. In Indonesian culture there is a system of naming that does not divide the individual from society. The name signifies a direct social relationship. Therefore notions of individuality and autonomy are a culturally specific and in a constant dynamic context where definitions are constantly being changed.

The same argument can be shown by exploring the acquisition of gender identity. The developed self, central to the psychotherapeutic understanding contains many gendered assumptions. Such gendered notions have been contested by the feminist critiques of Mitchell (1986) Chodorow (1978) and Gilligan (1982) to illustrate that perhaps the psychotherapeutic concepts of self esteem and self development have been framed in a close association with characteristics ascribed to masculinity. It has been suggested by many studies that women place social relationships at the centre of meanings they produce. So the locally validated knowledge or situated knowledge may receive different gendered priorities in women's ways of making sense. In general, contemporary shifts in gender studies have shown that while the structured notions of gender still exist these permit a

number of permissible ideas of gender identity that contains understandings of class and culture (Griffiths 1995).

As I discussed in the last chapter the importance of gender in the groups is that it continues to illustrate the apolitical stature of the self-discovery stories that transform gender identity into an essential awareness of being a woman or a man and constructs an imperative for a 'pure' intimate relationship based on ideas of emotional sharing. Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender as performative, a constructed invention, reveals how the psychotherapies continue to construct the opposed identifications of female and male. In the alternative therapy frame the Jungian theory of animus/anima, the representation of masculine and feminine qualities within, reaffirms this to present an interesting challenge, however this challenge remains located in the inner emotional world where gendered social relations are unquestioned. It is the therapeutic objective to bring these male and female qualities into balance while maintaining a clear heterosexual form of emotional management. The groups also illustrate how 'men have feelings too' in contradiction to the masculinised model of reason and rationality. The groups provide a safe place for men to express these feelings and be accepted. Therefore this expression of emotions away from the usual social relationships can be described as a break away from the emotional routinisation of everyday life but not a direct challenge to deeply rooted notions of gender identity. The work of Chris in the area of men's therapy draws upon the myth of Iron John which has a distinct anti feminist message in the priority placed upon masculinity and maleness, just as the similar area of work that focuses upon women and myths do. There is never any discussion of power dimensions associated with such separatism, conflict and hostility are returned to the notion of balance.

Therefore from the issues of power in association with dominant cultural discourses and the continued representation of gendered social relationships, the content of the self-discovery story is revealed as being distinctly apolitical. The story of salvation where the trapped individual is rescued from the social baddie depends totally on an inner resource. The telling of such a story neglects the very important aspect of the social relations in the group where the story was taught. It is only by

exploring my participation in the groups that another central feature of the relational character of the self-discovery story is shown. This is the feeling of belonging.

Story telling and belonging.

The self-discovery stories create a shared community, a culture of alternative health and education, therefore any sense of 'personal being' or 'being real' is created by coming to believe in a story of self and the acceptance and practice of this story becomes the validation process of this belief. It is the binding and weaving activity that exists between the individual and their social life in a dialectic relationship that I argue here are central to understanding self identity, where the framing and the social practice are integral to each other.

How the self is experienced is clearly defined and constructed in this psychotherapeutic framing and social practice of story telling, although the concepts of this self have many interpretations. Becker (1986) defines culture as forms of story telling that create a sense of unity. I have shown in the content analysis how this unity is created in the belief in an inner self. I have shown in the field work analysis of the groups how the self-discovery story is very successful in creating cohesion and unity between the members. When these groups are placed in the wider context of interconnected alternative settings, the many stories of health, personal growth and environmental concern gain an overall unity and becomes a story of seeing and understanding the individual in relation to the social world.

In this way story telling permits the individual to belong to a shared community where the processes of reproducing this story of self-discovery constantly negotiate a shared understanding of belonging. It structures a series of connections where interaction falls easily into the accepted and expected practice. This can be illustrated by the repeated use of rituals within the groups.

During the fieldwork the feeling of belonging was an experience expressed by many participants and felt by myself. The techniques used in the groups to promote the beginning of a story, the rounds, the visualisations, the encouragement to

articulate what was felt, are methods to share an intimacy with others that gave a sense of belonging. These techniques were often placed into a ritualized form of social interaction such as: the formation of the circle, the focus upon a center point placed in the circle, holding hands, the use of a gong or bell to define a change of interaction, the use of candles and relaxing music. All these rituals were repeated throughout the groups. Within the alternative therapy field, these rituals are also prescribed as a therapeutic technique for self help, Affirmations² are used in Louise Hay's work, Commitments are used in Co-counselling.³ The Iron John book, used by the facilitator Chris, returns to rituals as rites of passage and connection with nature. Claudia's work was full of theorised rituals of nature from Chinese philosophy, the work of Rudolf Steiner and paganism. Craib (1992) notes that this therapeutic use of rituals shifts from Durkheim's original identification of rituals as a means of confirming collective support and common understandings towards an immediate emotional satisfaction. However, this immediate emotional satisfaction is a social process of cohesion and shared understanding. Consequently in the alternative therapy groups it is this very emotional satisfaction that produces a sense of belonging. As Lofland showed in his study of a cult, a key strategy in becoming a member is to be subjected to extensive interaction that promotes a positive and accepting affect (1966). I am reminded of the closing comment made at the end one seed group weekend when a member stated that the next session would be like a family reunion. I also draw attention to the photographs on page 149 that show the embodied nature of emotions and feelings that give an immediate physical connection with others. It is these expressions of cohesion and warmth that give explicit signs in the formation of networks and interdependencies in the social relationships.

It is interesting that in most stories told in the interview setting this expression of belonging is articulated into an understanding of connection that the realisation of the inner self is said to bring. Through this theme of connection the content of the stories enable many abstracted forms of understanding belonging. The self is an open container that holds many stories, the negotiation of belonging can be on many levels

² Affirmations are illustrated in the Appendices for chapter three p.14.

³ Commitments are illustrated in the Appendices for chapter three p. 11.

and from different perspectives. The self is both myself and more. As Ricoeur notes *"To say self is not to say myself"*. (1992:180) It is myself, and it is "we". I noted in Chapter Two, the interesting use of "we" in the interviews. The stories identified how "we" is used as a prominent pronoun even when the speaker is referring to their own particular activities. This use of "we" is a particular representation of the shared understanding that the alternative therapy groups promoted. Hence this "we" refers to a community of shared beliefs, it encourages the listener to be part of these beliefs and invites each listener to become a member. I certainly identified myself with the "we" in the interview setting. I belonged to this shared world of understanding and I was able to negotiate this belonging because I now was able to understand the self in the groups.

Therefore I have presented the argument that the psychotherapeutic understanding of the self is a particular form of emotional management that is prescribed by a specific culture. On one level, as highlighted in my discussion of belonging, the content of the story telling is abstracted from the concrete social relationship upon which it depends. I have suggested that this may be because the psychotherapeutic model assumes an inner location of emotions that transcends any discussion of how such feelings may arise. I now propose that this transcendence is a distinct form of narrative organisation. Firstly shown to be central feature in the creation of a success story, which once again prioritises the individual and secondly is advanced by the use of a metaphorical self which permits an ultimate transcendence to universal themes beyond any connection with the social milieu.

A Distinct Script.

A story of success.

The nature of a success story demonstrates many similar characteristics with other stories. The notion of salvation (of being saved) has religious and romantic origins and comes from a deeply rooted narrative formation of how to tell life stories (Kirschner 1996). Narrative is a primary way of organising experiences, it is a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation promoting intersubjective understanding (Berger 1997). Psychotherapy uses this narrative form of salvation to

develop the success story. As a generic social process this way of managing life changes can be shown in other areas.

The interactionist analytical development of stages illustrate how individuals cope with different life changes conceptualised as 'status passages' (Strauss and Glaser 1970, Hart 1978 Reissman 1989). It is argued that when a major life event occurs, such as divorce or the experience of bereavement, certain stages of resolution can be identified from the way that these life events are narrated retrospectively. This is illustrated by many studies on the experience of chronic illness and disability (Kleinmann 1988, Williams 1984, Bury 1982, Robinson 1990).

In a different way studies on religious conversion illustrate how a new beliefs are incorporated into an individual life story. In Lofland's study of religious conversion he defines key social processes in the stages of: initial involvement, conversion and the continued maintenance of faith and hope. Therefore he illustrates the ways that shape a new formation of narrative (1966). These three stages are directly comparable to the introduction, belonging and the construction of a new sense of self demonstrated in the alternative therapy groups.

Life events such as chronic illness and religious conversion can be brought together by Denzin's (1989) notion of 'epiphanies'. The epiphany occurs in problematic interactional situations where the persons confronts and experiences a crisis. Denzin's description of four epiphanies illustrates how this confrontation and experience may be sudden, accumulative, illuminatory or involve minor events, but the main objective is that such confrontations and experiences promote the narrative reconstruction of these experiences to create a new sense of understanding. The reconstruction of these narratives has been analysed in many ways, but the overriding issue remains that in a majority of cases the narrative transforms the experiences into a sense of hope for the future, a success story. Goffman's identification of success stories shows how a favourable view of the past and future is sustained in contrast to a sad story where this cannot be personally achieved (Goffman 1961). This is shown in my analysis where most participants achieve a success story directly related to the reconstruction of narratives employed in the self discovery groups (apart from Mary and Anton who achieve a success story from another frame and Margaret who continues with her personal sad story). Placed in the philosophical terms of

MacIntyre (1985) this role of success can be related to the need to create a sense of having a good life which is implied to be some sort of universal imperative. The alternative therapy groups take past experiences and reconstruct their meanings through this narrative form. What needs to be identified is that this reconstruction is shaped into a very distinct form. The narrative style of expressing and managing the individual's intimate feelings and emotions into the hope for personal change is illustrated in the alternative therapy groups to clearly reveal a learned script.

The psychotherapeutic message of emotional expression that uncovers a hidden self, promotes the understanding that problems are brought to the surface within a distinct interactive order. A new perspective in family therapy suggests that the objective is to create a new storied experience of continuity in the creation of a positive sense of self (White and Epston 1990). Here the recognition of psychotherapy as a reflexive reconstruction of a person's autobiography mediated by the therapist is highlighted, acknowledged and becomes the method of working. In this way the governing of subjectivity, the emotional management of the client is perceived as a positive tool as it externalises the problem. The problem identified by the client and therapist is named and given an identity to exist outside of the individual therefore the problem can become a character in the story to be overcome. This work has shown to be particularly relevant with children. It is interesting to note that the therapists, White and Epston, draw upon a very different aspect of Goffman and Foucault's work than the areas of emotional management and the governing of subjectivity that I have mentioned. They argue that a vast amount of life experiences fall outside of dominant stories so they are hard to change and make sense of in some way. However as they fall outside of dominant stories the therapist may enable these experiences to become storied to provide an alternative ground for possible outcomes perhaps beyond the expected outcome. This is described by White and Epston as Goffman's concept of unique outcomes. Using Foucault's analysis of power White and Epston stress the ascending possibility of this power shown by resistance, the development of alternative discourses. They link this explanation to show how the counselling role can promote the power of the individual by encouraging a unique outcome, consequently counteracting the notion of 'docile bodies' ready for inscription and reconstructing the idea of an 'enlivened

spirit'(White and Epston 1990:31). I have shown these ideas of empowerment and the creation of authorial authority to be present in the general theories of the psychotherapies and practised in the alternative therapy groups. Therefore therapy is seen as the generation of alternative stories but in what way is an outcome unique? The analysis of the nature of the story constantly reveals a distinct learnt script. Again the content of success stories transcends the social relational component of how that story came about.

Echoes.

Here I quote the words of Werner Erhard the founder of the movement called Est, a particular approach to self discovery using the elements of the human potential movement. Est promised to transform your ability to experience life.

"I realised that I knew nothing. In the next instant after I realised I knew nothing I realised I knew everything. It was so stupidly, blindingly simple that I could not believe it..... The peak experience that I had in 1963 was a peak experience of what I call the Self.. I truly experienced the self, not myself : the word 'my' belongs in the world of concepts about the self, not the experience of the self". (Cited in Kaminer 1992:63-4). Kaminer then shows how his story continued to identify other major influences in his change such as Zen Buddhism and Scientology. As she states: *"He blended the rhetoric of several different movements into a babble of his own and convinced people he was saying something different"* (Kaminer 1992:64). The narrative structure in Werner's story resembles the narrative structure of the facilitators, as shown in Tony's definition of 'the self', Jill's realisation she knew nothing and everything, Martha's recognition of Zen Buddhism. In the analysis of the self-discovery stories the terms 'realisation' and 'experience' were found to be a prerequisite to define this inner self. The analysis of the wider setting of alternative health revealed many echoes where the script was very clear. For example, on page 194 the advert for Seamlessness repeats a comment made by the facilitator Martha. It is interesting to note how Est is now marketed as 'The Forum' that states "You are the writer, director and star of a one person play" (Kaminer 1992) epitomising the message of authorial authority contained in the alternative therapy movement.

A paradox arises that although the story content promotes authorial authority, to make sense of your own life, the knowledge contained in this therapeutic relationship is organised in a very specific interaction. I will explore this paradox by examining the idea of a metaphorical self placed in an autobiographical narrative form. I suggest that this is central in the ability of the self-discovery story to transform the social relational aspect of emotions, our ability to recognise ourselves in relation to others, which always infers notions of power to become a story of salvation, a detective story of rescue where the relations are perceived inside, in an inner private world of subjective experiences.

The Metaphorical Self.

The self-discovery story depends upon a distinct recognition of 'the self'. The self moves beyond an understanding of 'myself' associated with the notion of self identity to become a distinct entity on its own. The self becomes a representation of a whole set of beliefs. I suggest that 'the self' is the pivot for telling alternative therapy stories. The story teller is able to present all the complex meanings of the inner and outer social world within one location. In this way the self becomes a metaphor, which is the "*means to identify one thing with another*" (Nisbet 1976: 32). Hence not only is the self a container for feelings, but also a container for all the different ways of knowing and understanding found in this alternative setting. Because of this complexity the self then becomes a concept with an immediate possibility to accommodate and transform a whole range of interpretation. The self as a metaphor is able to include the body, the mind, the spiritual and any awareness of individuality through self consciousness and the unconscious, it forms the centre for all life events to be focused. In this way:

"The concept of self derives from our need to articulate the idea of a focal point for the life and thought of an individual, and to do so in such a way that captures the intimate, subjective space of personal being" (Bakhurst & Sypnowich 1995:8).

However the self in the alternative setting also moves beyond a particular understanding of an intimate personal being to incorporate an understanding of the universal. In the self-discovery stories the focal point for life signifies the universal and the particular not only in connecting an individual's life story with others but also providing connections with meanings beyond any social location. Terry

Eagleton shows how western philosophy has been committed to a belief in an ultimate word that will act as a transcendental signifier, therefore 'the self', or in the past 'God', becomes a centre point to which all meanings can be ascribed. He notes how this ultimate word has changed at times from: "*God, the Idea, the World spirit*", to "*the Self*" (1992:131)

In this way the self is both a "*metaphor of ownership*" for the individual (Bakhurst & Sypnowich 1995:7), and a means of constantly making sense of an unknown world. This making sense is seen in the self-discovery story as the continued narration of how patterns develop, forging connections and associations through which meanings are constructed and given a sense of validity. Therapy is described as "*the constructing of a narrative, the making of a generalised biography into a specific autobiographical tale*" (Bernstein 1990:56). In the alternative therapy groups the belief in the self, as a hidden resource, an area for potential and a connection with a spiritual meaning of life, enables a specific autobiographical tale while at the same time retains a shared system of beliefs. Therefore the autobiography both secures the identity of the individual and confirms the belief of a universal sense of self, where individual identity is insignificant. This message is the mix of western psychotherapies and eastern philosophical beliefs, the self empowerment message that places greater emphasis upon the individual and the identification of a self that is totally devoid of this recognition of individuality. The metaphorical self is able to contain both contradictory positions of individuality and achieve some reconciliation between the two. The self is both the I, the you, the world and the cosmos. Therefore this self is able to transform social life into a new set of meanings. In the self-discovery story the ordering of experiences does not have to follow any chronological sequence, but transform these experiences into a new way of connecting these experiences. Not only do the stories link the past, the present and the future, but they also demonstrate how this sense of self can move between worlds of different experiences. Hence when we describe the self in a metaphorical sense it enables us to collect and unite all connections within each individual. This is the case whether the story teller perceives these relations as metaphysical, imaginary, symbolic, as a notion of individual creativity, or the centre of autonomy. Here the self is open to metaphorical licence and told "*in such a way*

that it brings the pronoun in a condition that needs to be understood by imagery, imagination and experience." (Cohen 1994:139). Therefore the metaphorical sense of self thus externalising the self and making it tangible without the necessity of recognising concrete social relations.

This understanding of the influence of psychotherapy shows how the metaphorical use of the self in the alternative therapy groups continues within a politically neutral free arena. The sense of identity seen to arise from the material, symbolic social world, *"the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity"* (Benhabib 1992:161), are somehow changed into the psychotherapeutic development of self empowerment and the eastern philosophy of transcendence to form a *"coherent narrative that stands as my life story"* (Benhabib 1992:161). This was not the way that Benhabib discussed the complex web of relations from which a sense of identity arises. This apolitical identity is constructed for the creation of the modern identity crisis. As emotions are prescribed as having an inner location and residence, the language of the psychotherapies to represent this inner world provides some generalised common expressions that are founded upon complex problematic social assumptions (Schafer 1981). Therefore the psychotherapies are a construction of a story that depends on naming fears, the naming of these fears then enables an expert to develop in the resolution of these fears (Phillips 1995). It is argued that these fears are based on the *"anticipation of the future"* and this future is set in the experiences of the past (Phillips 1995: 50). Thus the definition of fears constructed by the psychotherapeutic language individualises the problems of social life and the solutions to these fears proposed in the alternative therapy setting provides a distinct spiritual response. Such a method of defining fears and concerns ignores the interaction that constitutes them. Therefore the fears have nothing to do with the power of others. Social identity is perceived as the "Baddie" and the alternative psychotherapeutic language of "trusting the process" defines an inner system of knowing where authenticity can be found. This places the therapist as the expert. Thus it is the nature of the story that can transform these dimensions of social power and location into an individualised version of authenticity in the search for the true self.

The importance of a metaphorical self in transforming meanings can be shown clearly in social theories. Recent examples of social theories have described some very evocative terms for the concept of the self: *"the emotivist self"* (Taylor 1989), *"the gendered self"* (Coole 1995), *"the semiotic self"* (Wiley 1995) *"the Saturated Self"* (Gergen 1991). These descriptions give to an immediate sense of understanding a much broader picture of what such a self might exhibit, more than notions of identity. Jerome Bruner describes the purpose of telling your own story and the important analysis of autobiography for the researcher as the identification of these different metaphorical selves: *"possible self"* and a *"now self"*, the *"fictional self"* and the *"real self"* (1995:175). Psychoanalytical theories have identified the importance of recognising problems that may be encountered with notions of an *"ideal self"* and the end objective of psychoanalysis for achieving a *"developed self"* (Craib 1989). Immediately from such terms the reader has an understanding of possible difference and of possible change. In social theory explanations of the self descriptions range from, many selves, a fragmented self, to a no self. It is these descriptions that give explanations of the self such a wide range of interpretations. This understanding of the different selves identified in the self-discovery stories are central to the plot of salvation, *"the Big I and the Little I"* (Hyone), *"the shining self, the false self"* (Claudia). It is this ability of distinguishing different selves that transforms the ordering of experiences from the limits of time and place into a story of self, a metaphor that can be used to describe all meanings. It is the metaphorical self that enables the moral foundation to be incorporated into the life story of the individual. A personal story becomes transformed into the hope for positive change. This transformation can ultimately transcend social life so that self identity becomes a spiritual confirmation of individual faith. As Olney shows metaphors mediate between the internal and the external from which meanings are recognised by the association of patterns. If you ... *"connect the known to ourselves to the unknown of the world"* thus in the academic world and the therapy world we are constantly making available *"new relational patterns"* (Olney 1982:32), by promoting this use of the metaphorical self.

Therefore the self becomes the ideal term to appreciate, accommodate and assimilate all the various beliefs and interpretations any story may include. As

Robert Nisbet states, the function of the metaphor is, "*the synthesis of complex units into one image*"(1976).

An ending

I have presented the discussion of the conclusions from the analysis of the research groups in two different sections that emphasise:

- methodological implications in the exploration of stories where the content of the stories collected in an interview setting are complemented with how that story was learned in the social context.
- analytical implications in the exploration of stories where all stories from the interview and from the field notes become textual representations to be used for the creation of my story, how I produce this final story now. .

I raise these two points to try and clarify why and how the empirical data can be interpreted in different ways.

Firstly I looked at the social theoretical support for understanding a modern identity in crisis. I argued that this position assumes the psychotherapeutic location of reflexivity, which is the inner residence of emotions that frequently exist in contradiction to the expression of social life. The discussion of social change associated with late modernity highlights the self-discovery theme of disconnection where the individual is perceived to be lacking in faith in an increasing materialistic world and the problems of intimacy become paramount as the focus of meaning is transferred into the private world of personal relationships. I have argued that the alternative psychotherapeutic influence in the self-discovery stories transforms this understanding of conflict with social change by providing new reference points to secure a sense of identity from understanding the self.

I demonstrated how this influence, although posed as effecting primarily white, middle class groups, is enabled by the understanding of how knowledge is received and used in this period of late modernity or postmodernity. The explanations of 'lay reception' and 'heresy' both propose the individual to be in a more advantageous position to use psychotherapeutic developments to organise their

own options in the promotion of their own authority. I ended this section by showing how identity has become linked to ways of knowing not what is being done, which may possibly support the explanation of a cultural change where the priority of self development becomes located in therapy and associated with religious foundations in providing a new sense of meaning.

Secondly I have shown how the similarities of the self-discovery stories propose a distinct script. The maintenance and reproduction of a distinct script relies upon a different way of negotiating the prime location of reflexivity. Here I argue that reflexivity is rooted in the social relations that produce such a script. The self discovery content neglects issues of social power and location, as it is able to abstract its understanding away from structured circumstances. By exploring a social model of emotions I show how the self-discovery story is taught in the therapeutic relationship. I used Foucault's analysis of the confessional and Elias' understanding of emotions as a sign of social networks to show how the self is not only located in the content of the story but is an embodied concrete social relationship. I placed this social relational model of the self into a discussion of cultural and gender identity where specific discourses prevail to organise the way stories are told. I suggested that the issue of belonging is a key factor in the way that emotions are socially structured and defined in the emotional management of the groups.

Finally to support this exploration of the learned script I revealed a clear organisation of narrative that can be transferred to the way other stories are produced. This narrative organisation is discussed in relation to developing a success story and the use of a metaphorical self. The success story can be likened to others stories that become a means of managing life events and changes. The metaphorical self becomes the ability of the alternative therapy script to transform meanings and provide new associations for the recognition of personal identity and new beliefs. Thus this narrative organisation permits the transcendental character of the self-discovery script where the social relations of production are removed.

From this I am left wondering why my analysis of the self-discovery stories fits so well into these many complementary and conflicting theories. In Chapter Seven the empirical evidence I have gathered could be used to support the varying

components of the theoretical proposals: the pessimistic withdrawal of a narcissistic self, the positive emergence of an authorial self that can use a variety of knowledge to inform their own individuality: the prevalence of psychotherapy in our understanding of well-being. In Chapter eight I am able to show how the distinct story line supports explanations of a “no self” where the surface is used for the inscription of a new powerful body of knowledge. Also that part of this inscription is the moral imperative prescribed by the organisation of interactions to create a success story and provide access to numerous and continuous connections where experiences can be understood. A central part of the empirical support suggests distinct cultural changes from understanding modernity to the issues of cultural identity as a means of belonging. However I return to the aim of the self-discovery groups, to recover and prioritise a sense of self as a feeling self. The importance of telling life stories within these groups is to gain this feeling self, the confirmation that s/he can feel takes priority over the making sense of her or his world. It is the proposition that each person must be able to ‘feel’ experiences that cannot be given justice by locating these feelings in either an inner psychic model or a social model.

Which ever way I try to conceptualise this self and how it is constructed and the characteristics of its formation, the attempt to clarify this interactive process seems to deny the complexity of feelings and emotions. It is the understanding of the experience of self that is vital for sociologists to explore. This sense of self underpins the basic question of what it is to be an individual in society. By telling these contrasting accounts of the self-discovery story I have tried to show what is important to identify, the act of faith when you produce a story.

Telling Stories.

This is where the mirror image of the self-discovery stories and the production of this research story begins to emerge. As with the members of the groups, how I produce this story from my consumption of sociological knowledge is in the end an act of faith. I do not attempt to position myself as a defender or champion of one sociological explanation over another, I do not wish to make judgements upon the stories of others, but I do always return to the quality of interpreting the interaction shown in this research.

It is every authors intent to persuade in which ever way they can to tell their version of the self and this relationship to the social. The final way I present these explanations depends upon the original motivation of my research question. My original motivation was to see what happens. Patti Lather discusses categories of human interest that underlie research questions originally identified by Habermas: to predict, understand and emancipate. Lather in her post-modern feminist account adds the category of deconstruction (Lather 1991). I agree with the argument that deconstruction illustrates the power behind the explanations, hence to pose one argument against another is to miss the essential character of the question. I am trying to attempt, the postmodern solution to develop a multifaceted explanation without resorting to the relative stance of a "*post-paradigmatic diaspora*" where all concepts defy fixed meanings (Lather 1991:108). Defining meanings will always be central to Sociology, but the recognition that such definition may continually provide different interpretations is at the heart of a sociology of stories.

The self-identity stories reconstructed in the groups echoes the same way that my sociological research story is reconstructed. The systematic use of reflexivity, reflecting, ordering and interpreting the experiences. The idea of an inner reflexive dialogue that each person engages is shown to be in constant negotiation with yourself and others, and the social relations that produced such a story. It is from here that I return to myself.

Myself.

Reflection:

In these groups I felt, experienced and talked about my past in the hope to create change for my future. I have learnt the term, self. Such an understanding has not entered my descriptions of myself before. I learnt to use this description of self applied to me, which transformed the meaning of myself. My introduction into a way of talking about the self was also talking about myself in a different way. The self became my impersonal description, it enabled me to stand apart from myself and look at what such a self may contain. I was a subject to myself. This standing outside myself and understanding the self did bring an awareness of calm, peaceful feelings, where this description of spirituality can be placed. It was as if this self was able to make me stand still, breath, relax, express and take me away from the confusion and complexity of everyday life.

So here I am at the end of my research world and how to end this excursion is difficult. What have I learnt? What have I said? This final chapter is also a story of my own developing sociological identity. The transition from being there in the field to being here practising the techniques of analysis and writing. I have selected and assimilated various influences, various ways of understanding, a constant negotiation with myself.

Perhaps I can end with a recent conversation with my ten year old daughter, who has had no contact with sociological theory or the world of alternative therapy. When she asked what the title of "my book" was it did not make any sense to her. I realised that she had not heard the word self used in such a way. I asked her how would she describe herself, how would she know herself, she replied "What do you mean? Like a person.?" I replied yes. She answered "well, because of other people". Perhaps Marcel Mauss in his discussion of how the notion of the person has evolved into the notion of the self, explains the construction of this self in a complex social world. In this complex world you have to understand yourself as a person, as an individual, reflected against others first before you can manage the complexities of the self. My daughter knows herself, but she has not been taught to reflect upon this knowing in a therapeutic way to develop a distinct sense of knowing what this self might mean. I have. Before my contact with the social sciences I was not clearly aware of any knowledge associated with understanding how a self exists or is formed. The alternative therapy groups have now added another layer of construction to this understanding. However inside me, it feels as it does not matter whether I have absorbed this story and created a new self identity just like the other participants because this feels all right. I like the sense that I am able to create myself in the way that I tell my story. I like being given this authorial freedom, which gives me hope for change in my life and enables me to write this thesis.

What is essential to me is that the feeling of being myself remains, this might at times becomes very confusing, anxious, and unhappy, but I always know I am myself and not somebody else. Therefore I am able to gather a sense of where I belong, who is important to me, what sort of relationships I want, and what sort of beliefs I hold and express to others. I can love, laugh and cry. As I get older I like having a sense that the stories I tell about myself are more satisfying. This is the self that I want to hang on to, even though I may give a different story of this self here to the story I give elsewhere. Therefore I like having the chance to tell about myself in these varying contexts because this is my relationship with others that gives me meaning in my life.

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Appendices for Chapter Two.

• Letters of Introduction and response from facilitators.

Michael & Patricia	p.1-2
Tony & Hyone	p.3-4

• Letters to groups.

Introduction to RC group.	p.5
Request for interview RC.	p.6
Request for interview WISE	p.7

• Confidentiality.

p.8

• Analysis of stories	p.9
facilitators.	p.10-17
participants.	p.18-29
• Analysis of field notes.	p.30-42

Confidentiality.

The confidentiality of the participants is preserved through the use of pseudonyms and any points concerning residence, location or work is disguised. This disguise is formed to give a close representation of social issues such as age, class and occupation.

The confidentiality of the facilitators is preserved in the same way except for Tony and Hyone, Michael and Patricia, who wished to keep their identity public as they hope to further other people's interest by sharing such personal information.

Analysis of stories.

The following pages, 10-17, are copies of the coding and sorting techniques I used to identify themes and the stages of the story from the transcribed interviews of the facilitators.

The coding sequence was devised from reading and allocating categories to the original transcription. Each category was identified by highlighting the different themes in specific colours. The categories identified were then transferred onto the summary coding document to assess similarities and differences in the content and style of story presented.

The same coding document was then applied to the transcriptions of the participants. This revealed a distinct echo of the themes narrated in the facilitators stories.

The participants' stories were then looked at as a group within themselves. This was achieved by summarising the content of the stories told to highlight any key differences in the way the story was told. This is illustrated on pages 18-29, however the importance of colour coding has been lost in the photocopying. The same method of colour coding was used to identify key themes and stages of story telling. The prevalence of the theme concerning relationships highlighted the difference between the major and minor key used in Chapter five.

Analysis of field notes.

Finally, on pages 30-42, I present some detailed field notes from the three key groups. This shows how the recording identified what happened, and my reflection upon my role as researcher and self-discovery participant within the groups.

Ways of telling the story	Plot/ story line Uniqueness	Similarities
	Through his own path of realisations and experiences, of what he learnt about working and touching this core self. Story consists of many examples from dreams and sessions to illustrate this experience. This continues to develop his own work. "Like a seed unfolding".	Looking for something what brought them to look.
	Through life experiences and what she learnt from these experiences. Dreams and life events are described.	What is discovered
	Through an environmental path. Awareness of pollution and a spiritual ecology. Central is the connection to life beyond this planet. Life events focus upon travel and meeting other cultures. Work developed incorporates christianity, Legends, mythology.	Knowledge used
	Story returns to childhood and life events that led to her learning more about herself. From yoga and massage, the focus now is upon being a priestess and healer. Central is life beyond the reality we know. She receives channelled information.	Reconstruction Realisation
	Story starts from looking for therapy to help with relationships. Past history in feminist movement. Her present work in re-evaluation therapy is developed alongside beliefs in a natural essential self philosophy of Zen.	Message.
	Story starts by following a spiritual path being taught by a guru in India. This spiritual experience now incorporated into her definition of self and way of working with therapy as a path of transformation and change.	What changes brought about
	Story follows a decision to train as in NLP for business reasons. Now practicing this therapy spiritual beliefs are incorporated especially consciousness from yoga teachings.	

CONTENT

Key themes.
inner / outer
connection / disconnection.

STYLE OF STORY

Setting Out on Journey
Search / Discovery
Findings / Connections
Reconstruction.
Proclamation

2 opposites.
 senses everyday life.
 uses 2 sources.
 changing
 core-centre
 process
 self existing radiance.
 transcendent self.
 INTERFACE.

WORDS
 evil - live
 devil - lived

coding

Defining Self #d

like a
 seed,
 fold.
 force
 at that time.

discovery

#dd

process

#dp

working

#dw

realised

#dr

experience

#de

sense

#ds.
 TOUCH.

JOURNEY.
PATH ROUTE

TOUCH.

-TRANSCEND.
 -TRANSFORMATION

MIRACLE.

RESPONSIBILITY.

physical pain.

Change Growth

CREATOR

Drives.

God within

GOD

connection

#C unity.

individual

relationships

social

boundaries

Religion..

norms

drives

Disconnected
 organisation
 control

Split
 lost
 manipulated

Stories.

life
 D. experience.
 relationship as hap.
 childhood
 mother.

images
 mandala void.
 bubbles. life/death.
DREAMS.

Bene's tre
 gaining self.
 resource
 another perspective.
 Immense freedom.
 choice.

Balance
UNITY
 to be at ease
 good state. feeling good
 different ways of relating

Synchronicity.

the masks are uncovered.
Past lives.
Natural Cycle
True Self.

POTENTIAL.

up inner truths.
higher levels.

coding

Defining Self #d.

discovery

sense
Touch.

working

realised

experience

process

stories

life

images

ecological

child

friends

Introduction by friends.

change growth

individual

relationships

social

drives

norms.

connection

unity

disconnection

benefit's
Strength.

responsibilities
expectations.

Utopia

SOCIETY

NATURAL cycle
rhythm.

horizontal.

TRAPPED.
Materialism.
Distorted.

Masks.
channelled by parents.
Society channelled knowledge.
too polarised.

igger- Little Self.

14

coding

Defining Self #d.

discovery

sense

process

working

realised ✓

experience ✓

Change Growth

individual

relationships

connection

social

boundaries

norms

drives

Stories.

life

Australia.

images
bubbles

Beneh's
Strength.

Physical health.

Relationships
Self examination

that me.
in everyone
in everyone.
reknowledge.

coding

Defining Self #d.

me: essence of self,
Self: personality
ideas.
me
Me

discovery

process

working

realised

experience

sense

stories

life

images

ecological

child

friends

change growth

individual

relationships

social

drives

norms.

connection

unity

disconnection

from body.

heaven is
life now

universe

patterns relationships. M spirit non-being.

minism.

essential // constructed.

ature.
the nature
lightenment.

en
depth.
herent power.
material self.
actual self.

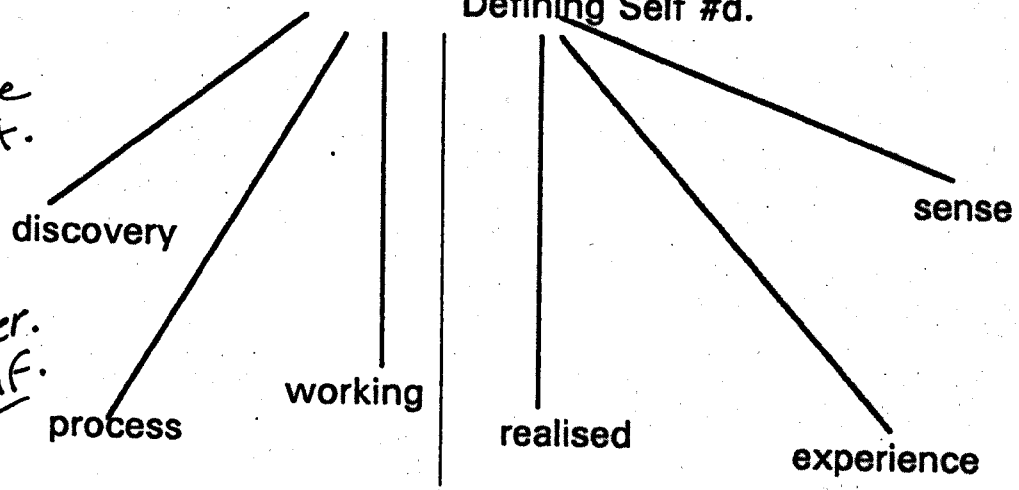
ourney.

language

ture.
edness.

coding

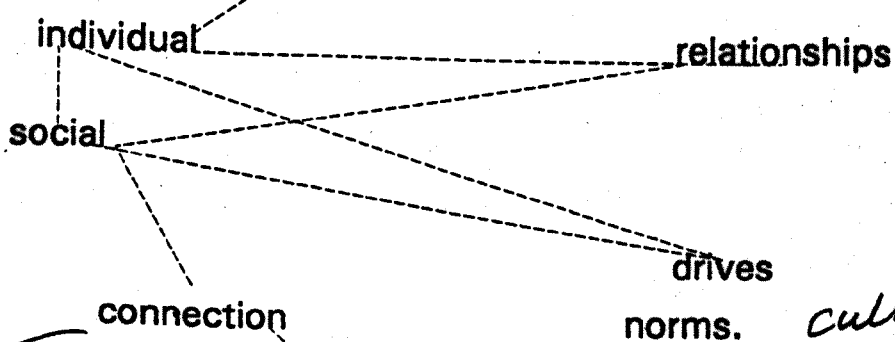
Defining Self #d.



stories



change growth



connection

unity

disconnection

↓
lack of flow
do not must experience
+ judgement.

fear defence boundaries
Separate.
Imposition + invasion

confidence.
release
loosing boundaries

growing +
vital.

Potential

Political
change.

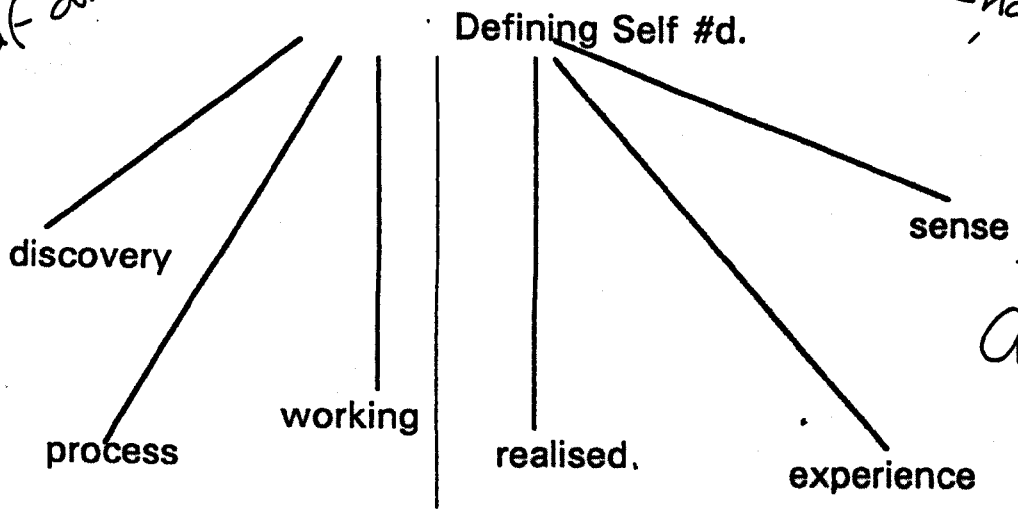
cultural construction
manufactured desires.
Social self.

transformation
self discovery.

coding

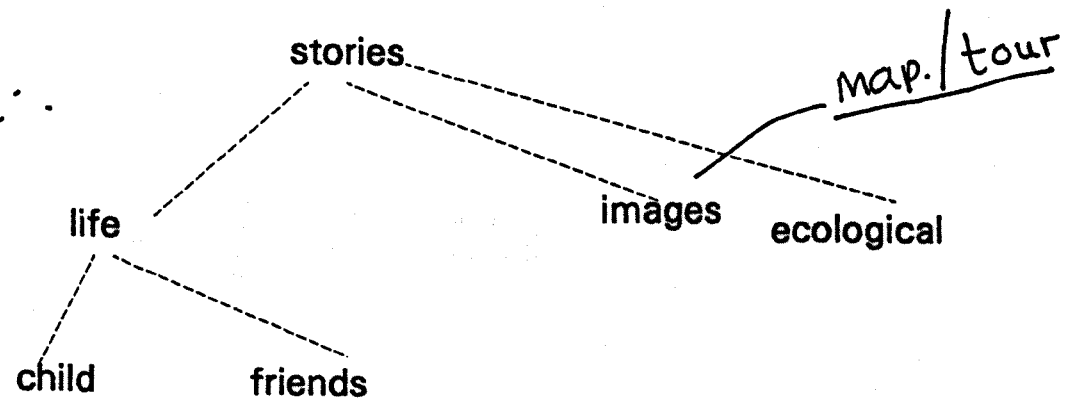
deeper belief
Ind power.

language
words.



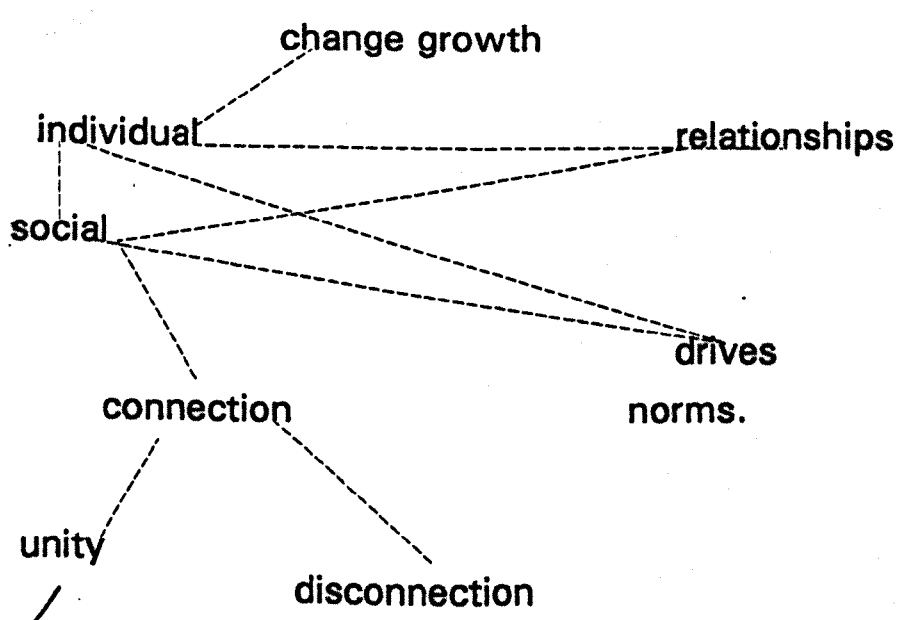
Get out of head
dark/Ligh.

Yoga.



map./tour

FARMING.



Choice.

director producer
of own movie.

heaven is life
now.

body
emotions

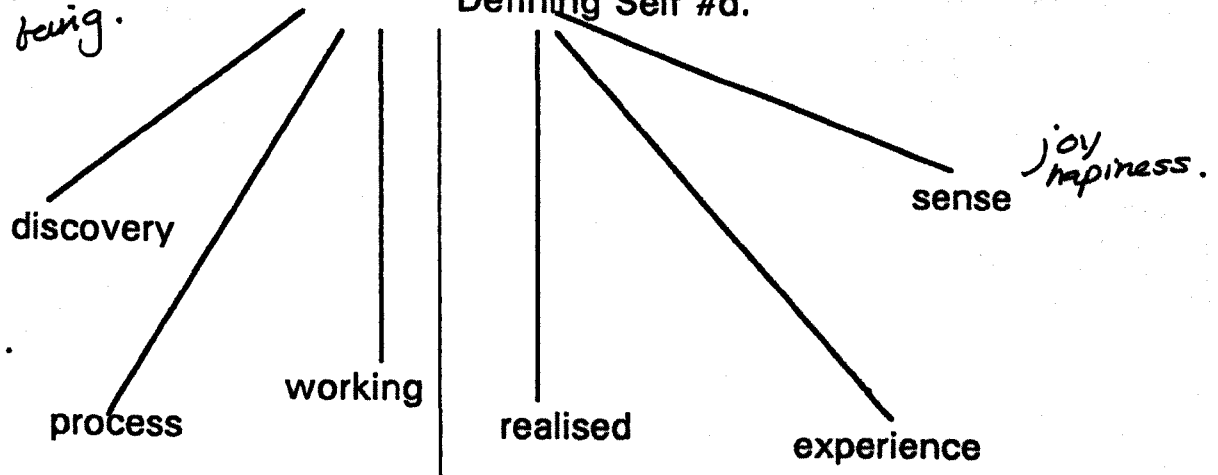
consciousness
from Yoga.

everybody is
everybody.

States of pure life.
nature of life.
the human being.
the real
multiple laws
higher self
the self
individual self
universal self

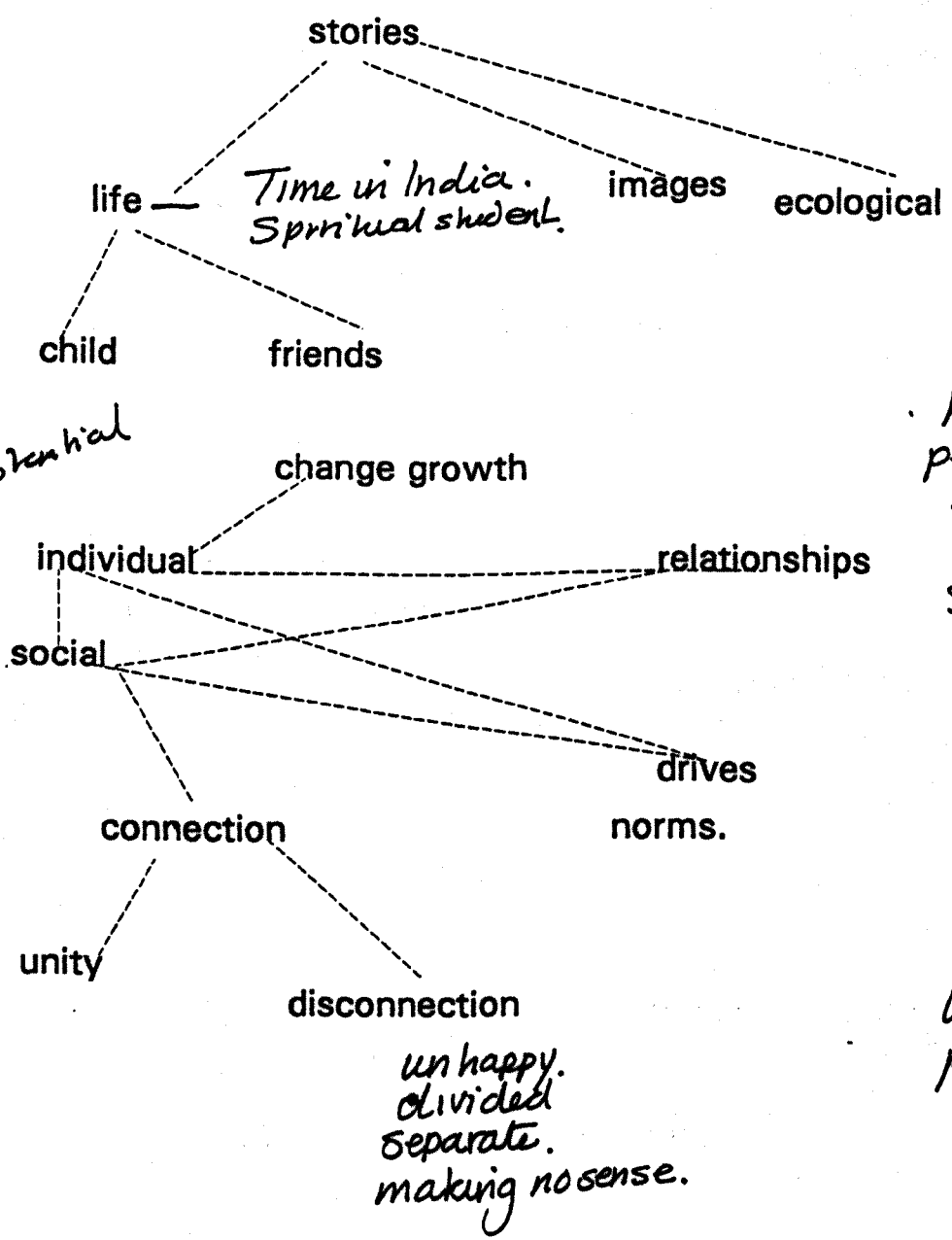
coding

Defining Self #d.



book Tibetan

True potential



happy state.
peace
feeling at one.

Surrender.
energy light.

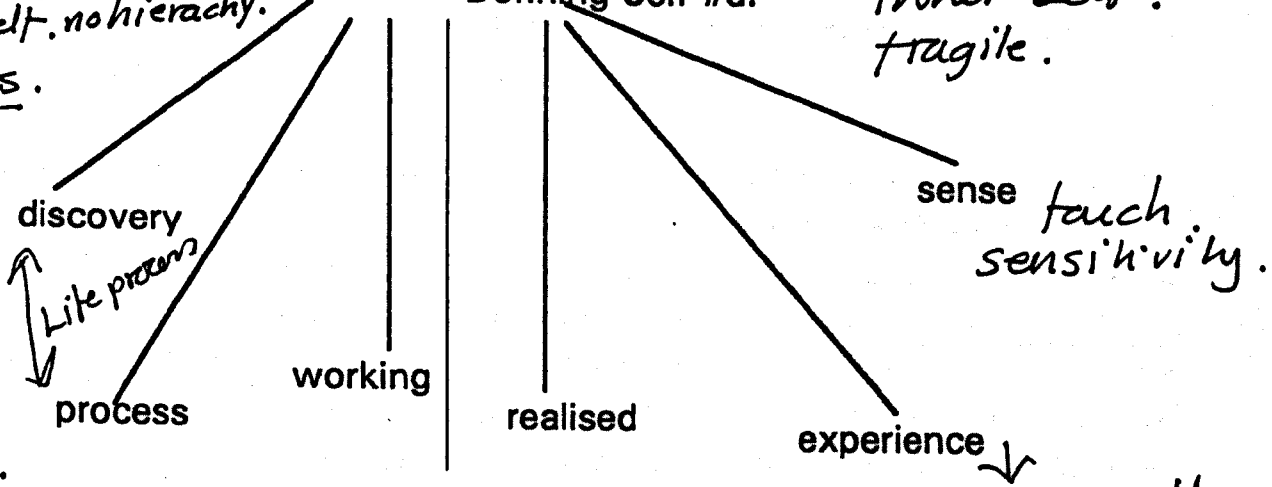
Self
covered in
black soot
polished shine
through.

aura.
being / doing.
higher self. no hierarchy.
low energies.

elevation of energies.
lower energy.
chakra.
essential energies.
inner self.
fragile.

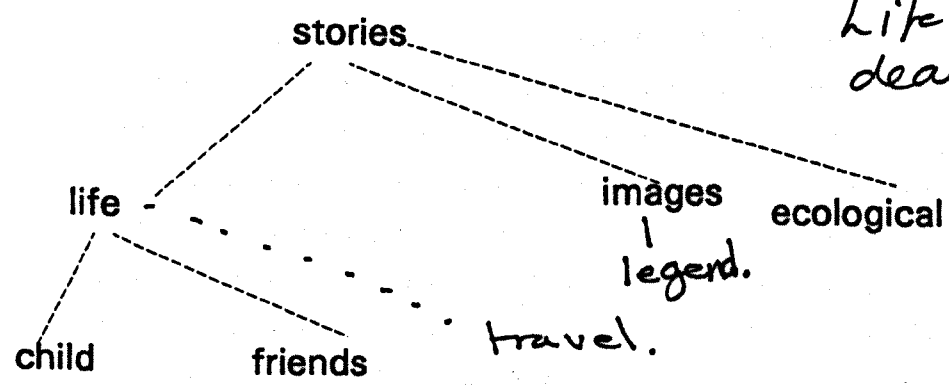
coding

Defining Self #d.



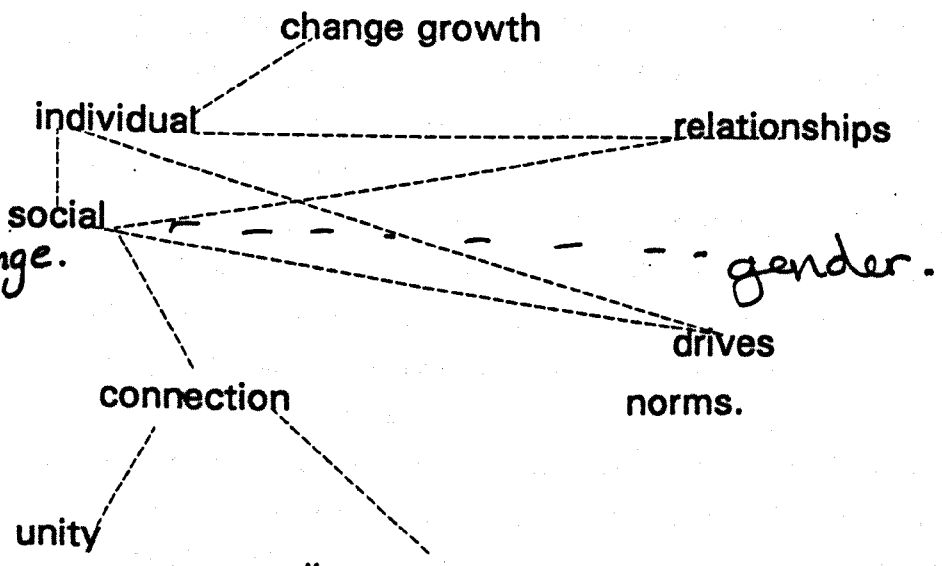
Path.

Life beyond death.
death experience
choices.



pollution health.
coincidences
Christianity
Buddhism.

rate of social change.



Structures.

rate of social change.
control.
remove sensitivity.

Lesley Interview Summary.

Lesley is 42, separated with two daughters. She has just recently moved into a new house that she shares with her new partner that she met at the seed group meetings.

Network
Network
Lesley's interview starts in a sequenced form giving a list of events that led her to look at why she was feeling so tense and unhappy when appearances gave the impression that she had a very comfortable life. She states she had a very ordinary life but was aware that something was wrong. To relieve the tension Lesley started Yoga and meditation. This contact brought her to know about a centre for Human potential in her local vicinity. Here she attended dream groups and because of her developing trust in the facilitator she joined the seed group. She describes a hesitancy of joining this sort of group illustrated at concern about what people would think, her husband's lack of support and her feeling that she didn't have problems. To help with her nervousness at attending she persuaded a friend to accompany her. Since attending this group Lesley describes how she has begun to understand the way she behaved in a different way. Her first example is the realisation that she always became physically ill when she couldn't cope with emotional problems. She describes this as being caused by pushing her emotions down so they appear as colds, flu, allergies, etc. Lesley used to attend a prominent Ballet School and she now understands that pressure and expectancies from this training has limited her body and once again created very bodily physical symptoms without recognising the emotional and psychological content. The Seed group helped Lesley look at these issues, in particular the movement exercises helped her to feel liberated. *"It is like growing, and like bits that have been cut off and bits that have just stopped growing are looked at."*

The theme of liberation is extended by the statement *"What I had really learnt is that I had narrowed my life, I had put blinkers on and accepted the blinkers, now I realise the blinkers are there, there is so much more potential for me to do anything and everything. For a while I thought I could try this and try that, now I feel I could do that."*

Lesley describes being taught how to trust her own "wise knowing". Lesley links this wise knowing with a feeling experienced in childhood a particular quality of feeling when she experienced a general feeling of goodness and understanding, though this feeling was precarious and frequently undermined by her family relationships. Lesley describes herself as always fitting in with other people to the extent that as an individual she did not exist.

Lesley's interview also shows how her contact with the seed group has led into individual counselling and a new nutritional awareness from people she met at the group. Through this she continues to look at her relationship problems experienced in her marriage, the expectancies of the roles of being a wife and mother. Lesley describes her motivation as finding peace of mind, of being an individual and learning to relate in a different way. This she now feels she is doing by entering this relationship with someone she met at the group.

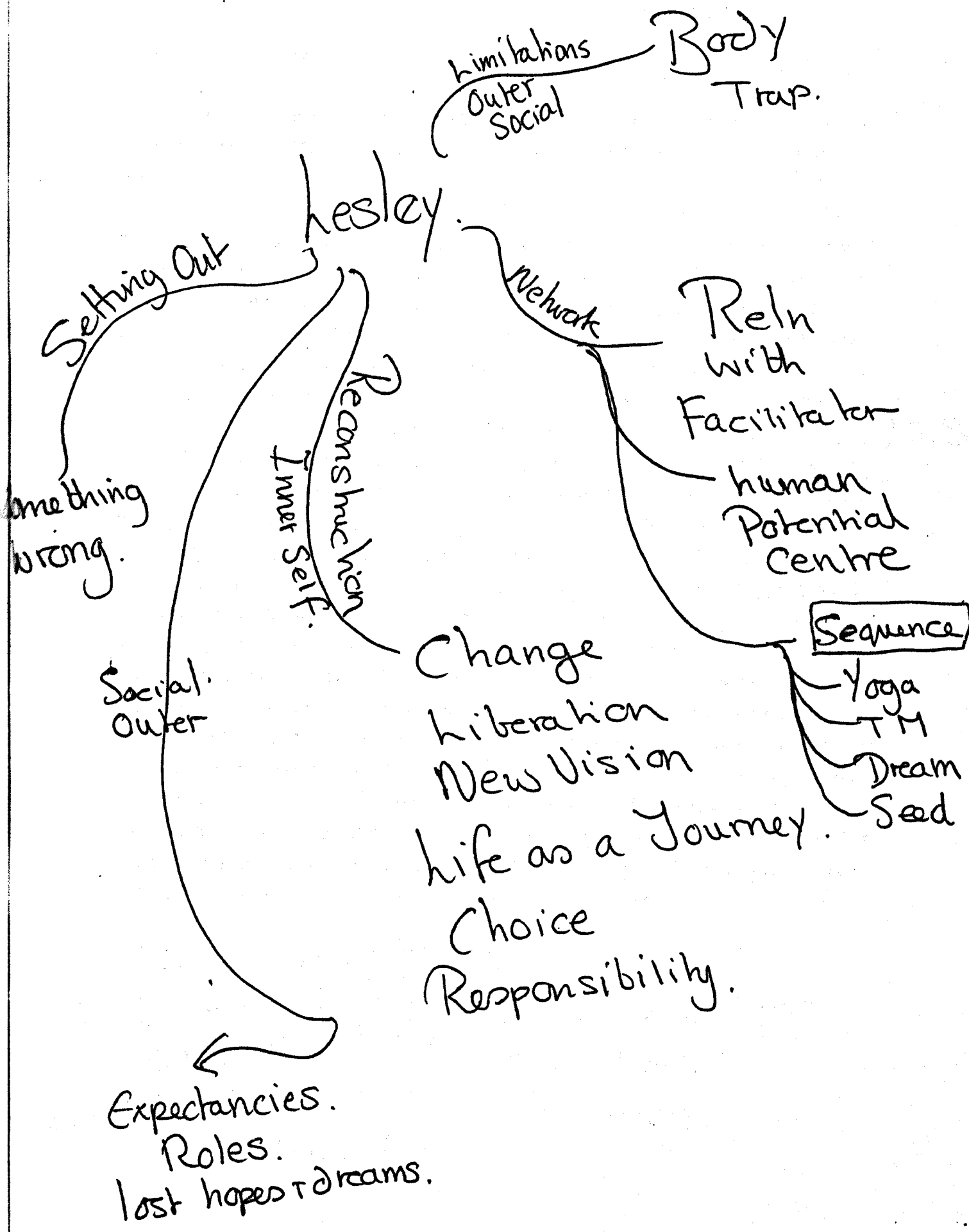
Lesley clearly shows how she feels she has been taught by the facilitator to look at these things in a new way and concentrate upon the here and now. her narrative reflects this teaching aspect and reveals terms used in the group such as "process" and her explanation of her own inner wisdom and potential. Through this Lesley feels she is more able to trust herself and make her own decisions from a different awareness.

Echoes of facilitator.

I.S. Inner Self 'Wise knowing'
O.S. Outer Social. 'Blinkers' narrow life.

Something Wrong. \leftrightarrow Liberation.
"New Vision"
"choice"

Body as Trap



James: Interview Summary.

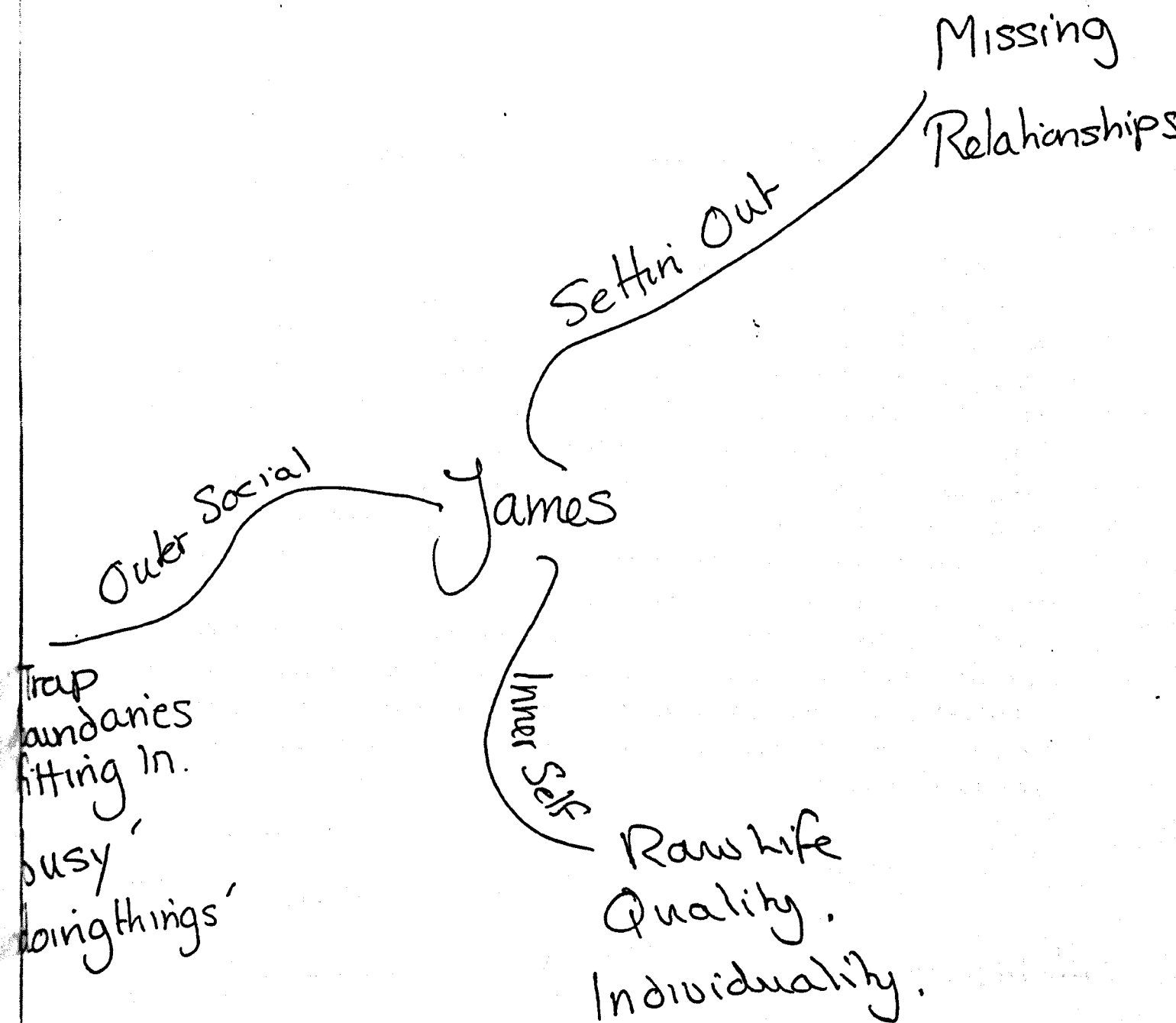
James is 21. He has just completed a degree and is presently looking for work. He has recently moved into his new partners house. Who he met at a seed group. James is the second son of the facilitator of the Seed group.

James starts his interview by describing how he realised when studying for his degree that he didn't know how to relate to people. Something was missing from his life and he made a decision to redress this balance. he found it hard to be with people and looked for possible meeting places where he could meet people who were of a like mind. He found the usual social settings of meeting people superficial. he joined a mystic group near his university and also decided to attend his father's weekend group with the main objective of meeting people. he notes how he had heard of Lesley from his father and wanted to meet her. James describes how he needs to keep in touch with his basis for life. This he explains as "Raw life" that he gets when listening to good music or at times of peace. He states that his raw life quality gets lost in society. He sees two main reasons why this quality gets lost in social life. That is where the structure of time makes everybody feel they have to be busy, always doing something. The other part is where people have to try and fit in with others through fear of being different. If you are different you make people afraid of you and you try to avoid creating this fear, so you fit in. James describes a trap where you fit in and try not to break the boundaries. One aspect of this trap is everyone has a fear of death that we try and avoid and try not to accept. In his attendance at the mystic group, James suggests that their belief in reincarnation is another trick to avoid this fear. He describes his childhood nightmares as a means to come to terms with these issues of life and death. Through this fear of life and death many people are afraid to be individuals. James sees himself as an individual and as never fitting in. He talks about his school days where he was very much alone. Teachers and schoolmates did not like his individuality, when team members were chosen for games James remembers he was always the last to be chosen. James says that as he started as such an individual he has never learnt the boundaries of how to fit in with others and feel confused about his place in the world. hence wanting a relationship is James main motivation for looking at himself through the Seed group. To try and understand where he fits in.

} I S

Echoes from Facilitators

I.S. Definition of Inner Self
O.S. Outer Social Life as Repressive. - Trap.
Conflict of Individuality. Boundaries
Relationship. Missing.

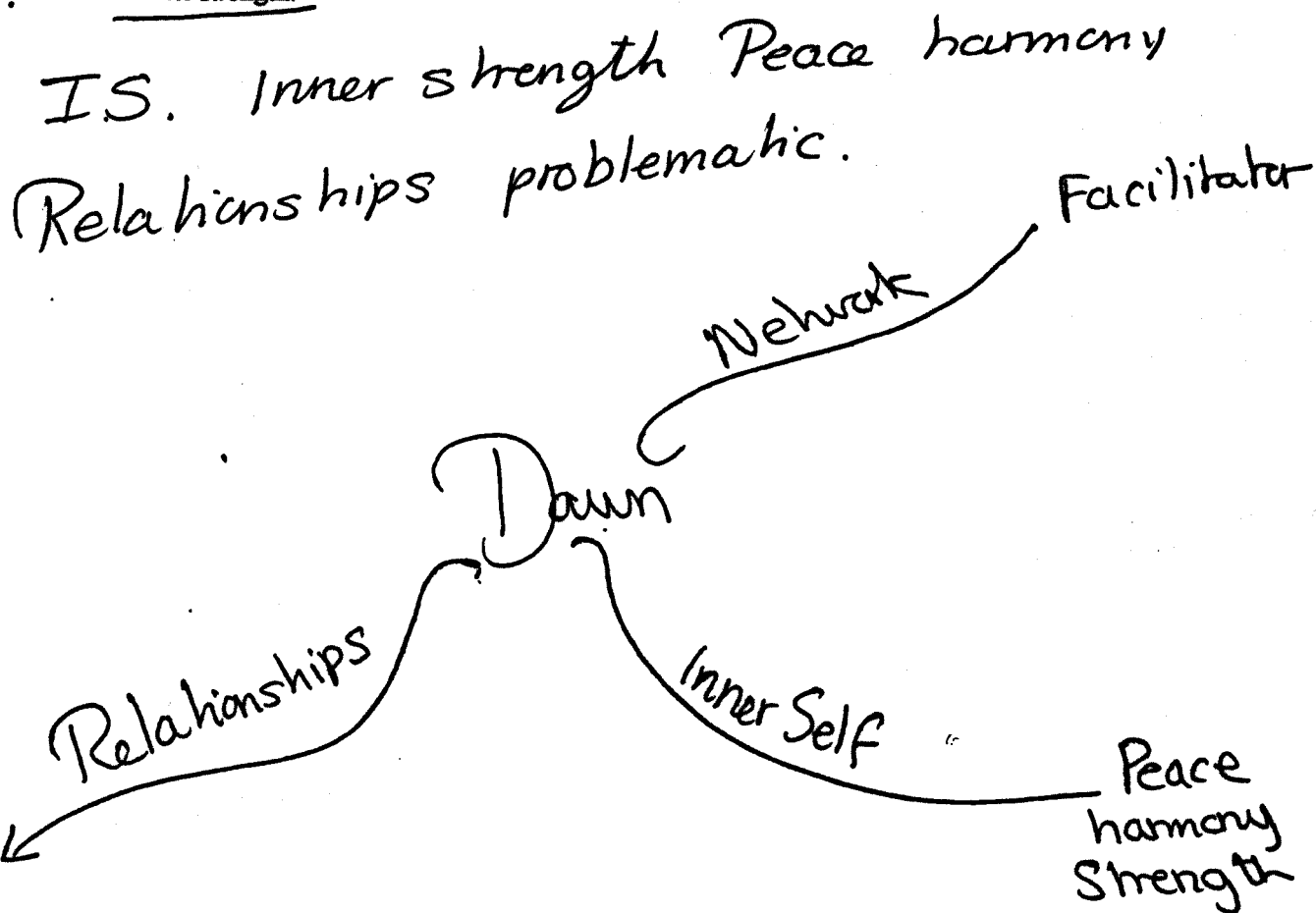


Dawn. Summary.

Dawn is 35, an artist living on her own with two children of teenage years. She has recently separated from a long term relationship.

Dawn sees this period of involvement with the seed group necessary to recover from the pain and hurt she has been feeling from the break-up of her relationship. She initially was very reluctant to join the group as she had wanted to work with the facilitator on her own. This she had been doing and he recommended that she should also attend the group. her first attendance at the group confirmed her worst fears as she knew that she would find it very difficult to relate to the men. Dawn has always found love difficult. She describes it as a powerful emotion that has governed her life. She falls in love and needs to fall in love as this is the fuel for her work, but know she is feeling much more cautious and reserved and wondering why she needs this part to her life. She questions whether she knows how to love or whether there are different levels of love. Dawn is surprised that she has already got involved with someone who attends the group, although she sees this as a learning growing experience as they can both look at the way they relate. As an artist Dawn expresses that she has always had a questioning way with the world. looking how parts are shown and what this may symbolise. Dawn sees both great beauty around her and great destruction, it is these two powerful extremes that she feels controls her life in everyway, in love and work. Therefore her work with Tony at the moment is to look for some harmony and peace within these extremes. Some balance that she can find in herself that will not be attacked by the changes on the outside. it is to look for some inner strength.

1.5.



Arthur: Summary

Arthur is a 52 year old divorced man. he has two children in their early twenties. He lives in his own house on his own or with a lodger. He teaches English language and literature at secondary schools.

Arthur became aware of the seed group through the facilitators recommendation. he has been seeing the facilitators on an individual basis. He has chosen this way as he wanted to know more about his dreams and a friend had recommended the facilitators approach. Arthur felt at this stage he needed more than talking counselling as he was a very good talker and that this wasn't helping him to understand how he felt. He felt that there was something being held in him, held back, a frustration that he did not understand. he also felt that he had no power or control over his life. His life had been thrown into confusion after his divorce after many years of marriage. Though he now speaks of realising that this marriage survived on a level of getting on with everyday life and bringing up the children. he realised that he felt very lonely and did not know how to relate. In relationships since his divorce he has felt that he remains very idealistic and just wants everything to be all right. The other main point was that reaching this stage in his life he really wanted to do what he wanted to not what other people thought he should do. he feels that he has lived most of his life by fitting in carrying on teaching whereas really he wanted to follow his own love of drama. Therefore the work he has done on himself with the facilitators he describes as beginning to reclaim himself from all the mess around him. He is beginning to follow what he wants and applying for different jobs. As for relationships, Arthur still feels very confused about what he wants. He wants to meet a new partner to share things with. He found the Seed group particularly real in this way, that you could express your warmth and love for people in a very open way. He feels as if he has made many friends, although this is also frustrating as he has seen other relationships develop from this group which makes him envious. He still feels that he has not been able to take what he has learnt from the group and develop his own relationship and this worries Arthur. Arthur describes how he has realised that he has allot of anger in him that he has never expressed and most of this goes back to his childhood relationships with his parents particularly his mother who continues to make him feel like a little child. Arthur feels very strongly about the way we bring up our children and the mess we make of the relationship. He talks about the need for respect that he has always tried to show and develop with his students. Arthur describes what he is doing now as really trying to be himself and to find out who exactly this me is.

Network
facilitator

O.S.

I.S.

Rel.

Outer Social

O.S.

held back

frustration.

No control confusion

Inner Self.

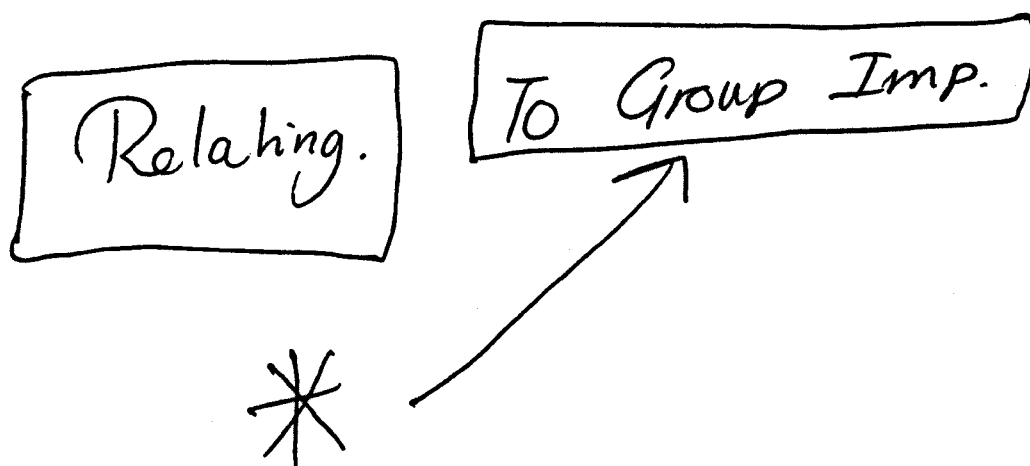
Reclaim himself.

Relationships.

Debbie Summary

Debbie is 19 and the youngest person in the seed group. She lives locally and found out about the group by knowing the people who live at the centre. She lives in rented accommodation on her own and is at present unemployed.

Debbie explained that she has always felt unable to bring herself forward. She is seen by others as very shy and reserved but she does not see herself like this, she states that she loses her voice and can become very silent. She says that she becomes most silent at the times when she would most love to speak out. Debbie expresses that she loves meeting people and being with people although she continues to find noisy men difficult. Debbie has found the Seed group very beneficial as it has given her a chance to be with all different kinds of people and learn to love them and understand them in different ways. This she feels has given her a new confidence to go out and meet other people and look at the possibility of joining other groups. She had just made an application to work at a self discovery centre in Greece that she thought would open up new things for her, bring her in contact with new groups and new people. The Seed group had given her a chance to get to know a new set of people that she knew she would remain close to like a new family.

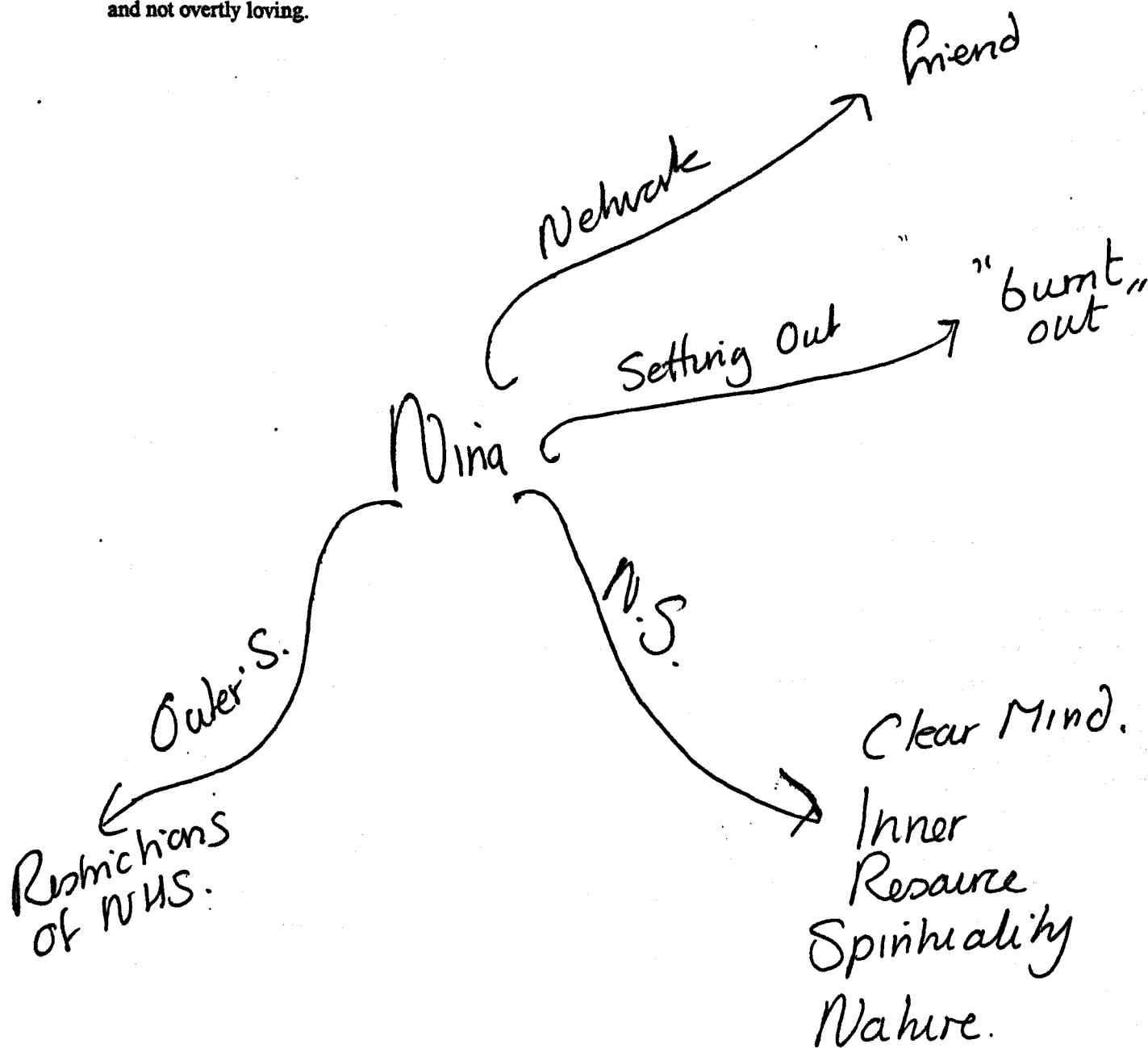


Nina Summary

Nina is 37. She is at present a student midwife. Nina came across RC many years ago after it was introduced by a friend. Nina felt she needed some support as she felt frazzled and burnt out by working in the peace movement. She needed someone to listen and was attracted to the political links that co-counselling makes. Nina returned to RC recently and sees this class as a refresher. This time she felt the need to keep her life in balance. Nina finds that this expression enables her to cope with the conflict of being in the NHS and the demands of the course. Another important aspect of Nina's knowing herself is her writing. Here Nina feels she explores herself by giving herself the space to clear her mind and bring things all together. This knowing she sees as important for herself as an individual but also in a deeper sense it links her with being able to identify with the women she works with, a collective sense of women giving birth.

Nina sees birthing as a right of passage into womanhood. Nina notes that political reasons of feminism brought her to midwifery but also this spiritual connection. When asked Nina describes this spirituality as an inner resource, nature, a sense of the seasons that will not last forever and are to be enjoyed. It gives Nina her understanding of life, being in nature and death, it is something that you are not just using words.

When asked what brought Nina to look in this way at herself and form these beliefs, Nina related her questioning and inquiry to joining a Quaker group at the age of 14, living in Northern Ireland as a protestant and being open. Nina returns to childhood memories of being left alone to explore and find out about herself. Her mother was a Jungian psychologist although she describes her family as closed and not overtly loving.



Clio Summary Interview.

Clio is 25, lives with her partner in a rented flat in the centre of town. She has worked as a teacher of young children. Her involvement with the RC fundamentals class is her first contact with counselling. Clio describes her motivation to attend as coming from her interest in counselling and the reoccurring feeling of "What am I going to do with my life?" RC was introduced to Clio through a friend who was also attending the course. Clio describes that she had to overcome her guilt of doing something so selfish as counselling. She describes herself as a very self morale person who has always seen the problems of society and feels that she has to work to change them, "to make the world better". Clio justifies her counselling involvement in two ways, firstly the direct link that RC makes with social change and the way that it's structures seek to counteract the traditional authoritative counselling relationship. Although at the same time Clio expresses her concern at the way RC may become forever discovering more about yourself instead of producing the change promised. Secondly Clio describes the connection between individuals and a better society. If we are all "sorted out" we would relate better and form a better world. Clio emphasises her concern at the way people are destroying the world. She takes the central theme of self responsibility explored in RC to describe how we are all responsible for the state of the world. She clearly makes the link that counselling "goes beyond personal well being" and that the "individual fits into the whole".

Moral
Proclamation

Critical
RC

A better world

Clio emphasises that there are many social restraints and uses teaching as an example of the rigidity that this structure imposes on the individual. Counselling is therefore described as finding the bits of me and becoming me. To illustrate this Clio tells the story of how since the age of 12 she has wanted to be an artist but that this ambition has been frustrated by the expectancies of society to get a job and her own self morality of doing something useful. Clio feels that counselling has helped her recover this ambition and that she has now applied to art college. It has given her the permission to follow what she wanted to do. Clio has also been able to connect this wish to be an artist with the possibility of doing art therapy at a later stage which she describes as combining her own interest with her desire to help others.

Social
Restrictions
S.O.

Clio presents a very clear picture of a society that is going wrong and her desire for a Fair society is described as one that does not "kill the individual".

SO.

Throughout the transcript the impression is of the intermingling of two voices. An integration of the therapy story taught in RC and how this has supported how Clio used to look at life. For instance Clio starts the interview by saying "I don't believe in society" and by supporting her belief in the individual art is a particular expression of this individuality. Words flow through that echo the story telling of RC. the hurts that are heaped upon everyone, recovery, RC helped me realise that we are all wondering around extremely hurt extremely wounded from all the experiences that are heaped on us and continually done. That's the motion I have adopted we all the time are doing the best we can. Because we live in such a harmful hurtful society stupid social imposed rules on one another that stop people relating to one another. We all the time are working on divisions not coming together. the description of divisions is a particular theme of the RC facilitator.

I.S.
vs
O.S.

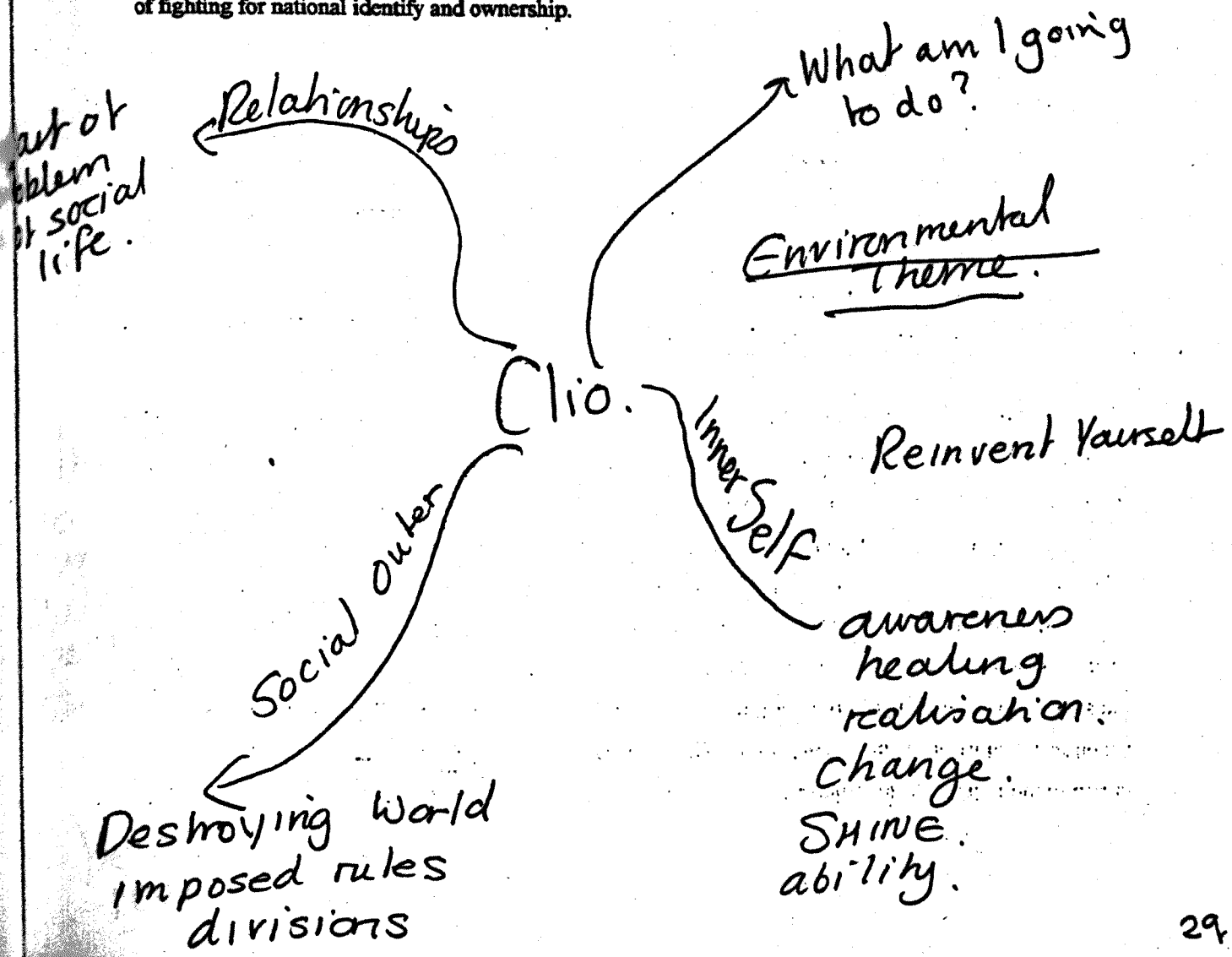
Another aspect of this link which goes beyond RC theory but is echoed in the beliefs of the facilitator is this issue of interconnectedness and self healing and planetary healing. "if you start realising yourself, it doesn't stop with yourself, you do have a greater awareness of how you affect the environment and one another. Ultimately if people are self healing then they will bring about the healing of the earth Sounds new age but I do believe it.

Also the link between healing and potential. "Human beings have so much ability to do such wonderful things to shine why don't we because we are all hurt. I guess I hadn't thought about this before I started teaching, they are the potential without the crap dumped on them they can go ahead and be effective".

Specific reference is given to how RC techniques "reinvent yourself"

"I felt guilty about attacking my parents in a session but as it was pointed out to me I'm not really attacking my parents it's their patterns that hurt me and I'm attacking their patterns that they have picked up, so it was OK to be angry. It's like a Pandora's box, you open the lid and think fuck. It makes you realise how good we are at these coping mechanisms to survive, when you do start looking its incredible the stuff you think of as you but it isn't really. It's like you are always reinventing yourself."

Interesting is that although Clio defines herself as not knowing politics the whole interview uses some personal issues to illustrate particular aspects but the focus is upon a very political statement of how the world can change. This is finally illustrated by Clio's admission of her change to being a vegan, Here her decision is based upon her belief that we are all connected and life should be respected. This leads to clear statements of housing the homeless feeding ourselves, and avoiding the regressive path of fighting for national identity and ownership.



Summary Dave: RC

I asked how he came to the group - through recommendation of a friend. Prior to starting the group Dave explained that he was looking for help in some way although uncertain of what that was. Dave has been off work for two and a half years. He left his last job with a local radio station working as a DJ after diagnosed suffering from depression. He has received professional referrals for counselling and medication. He feels that his depression was brought about by an accumulation of life events with the last being the separation of his relationship and being left on his own. he describes his illness where worries become terrors. After attending the group Dave now describes that he needs to understand what has happened in his life. He explains this understanding as a release and a way of not living a superficial life. This gives a new quality in his life that he feels healthier.

you can step out of the pain and not have it on your shoulders all the time, it gives you the ability to do that so that you finish off healthier...

This feeling is explained by the ability to talk and communicate in the group in a safe and deep level. This is something that Dave feels is lost from everyday life and explains his use of the word superficial. He feels that people are more real within the group.

It's like a refresher course, like an injection in the arm, you do come away feeling better, you feel you have had the ability to talk to someone and talk safely, and know that they have also felt the same. That is something that is so rare in relationships. I am a great believer that human beings cannot talk and that is the big problem in relationships, we can't talk in work and everything else. It's a big thing being able to talk to anybody and being able to talk to someone at any depth., with the freedom to do that

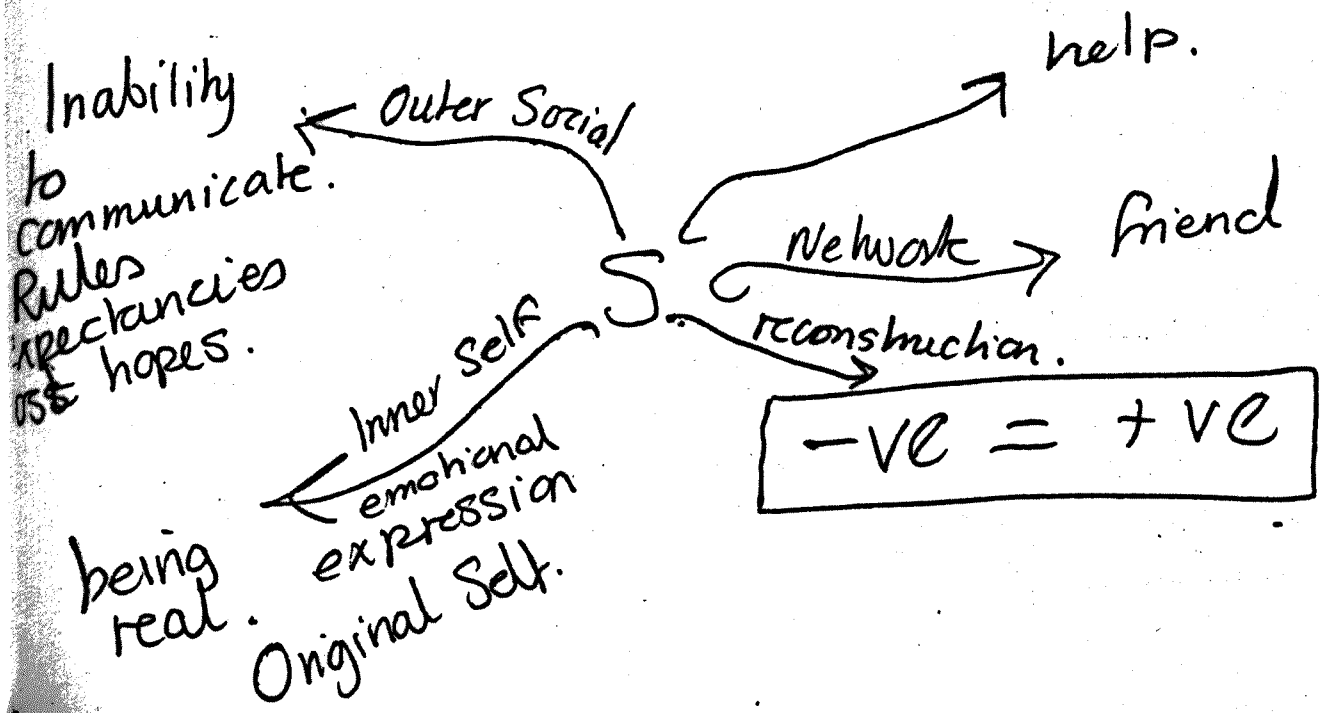
Dave describes the group as creating this safety to express emotions that he was unable to feel in his more professional counselling sessions.

Emotions came through that I hadn't had for a long time, but these emotions were so dampened through the eroding of my original self, It's like the difference between a glass of water and a glass of wine...

This original self is described by feeling that things had been lost as he grew up. Lost the ability to communicate, to relate, to follow his dreams of going to music college. In this way society is described as something that creates this loss through the expectancies of what you should do when you become an adult. Dave feels it is easier in social life to take on doing things and this makes it easier not to talk, easier to be ill rather than look at yourself and understand. Dave says he went into relationships for the wrong reasons, there was no balance in his life. he uses the words machine and robot to describe how he functioned in society as work and meeting peoples expectancies. The group "allowed to be people, to express themselves"

Dave also expresses some concerns over the way that RC operates. He notes that there is a conflict between the need for people to express themselves and break down barriers while at the same time the organisation of RC creates more barriers. He describes the financial side of RC as a form of pyramid selling that he feels gain goes against the feeling of being more real through the counselling side.

Dave uses the word danger that is difficult to get him to expand upon. I think he is suggesting that some people who attend RC fall into a trap of following a regime. Although this does not take away the benefits of the group that he feels has helped him to change negatives into positives. he feels that he is more able to return to his hopes of playing more music and creating a better relationship.



Mary Summary.

Mary is 26. She has finished college where she studied politics to degree level. She has always been involved in politics from an early age introduced to feminism by her mother. Mary still strongly believes in feminism and the importance of women supporting one another. Mary describes a feeling of something missing, a human element from her involvement with socialism. She saw an advertisement for the RC fundamentals class and liked the direct link it made with social change. Mary sees RC as marxist..

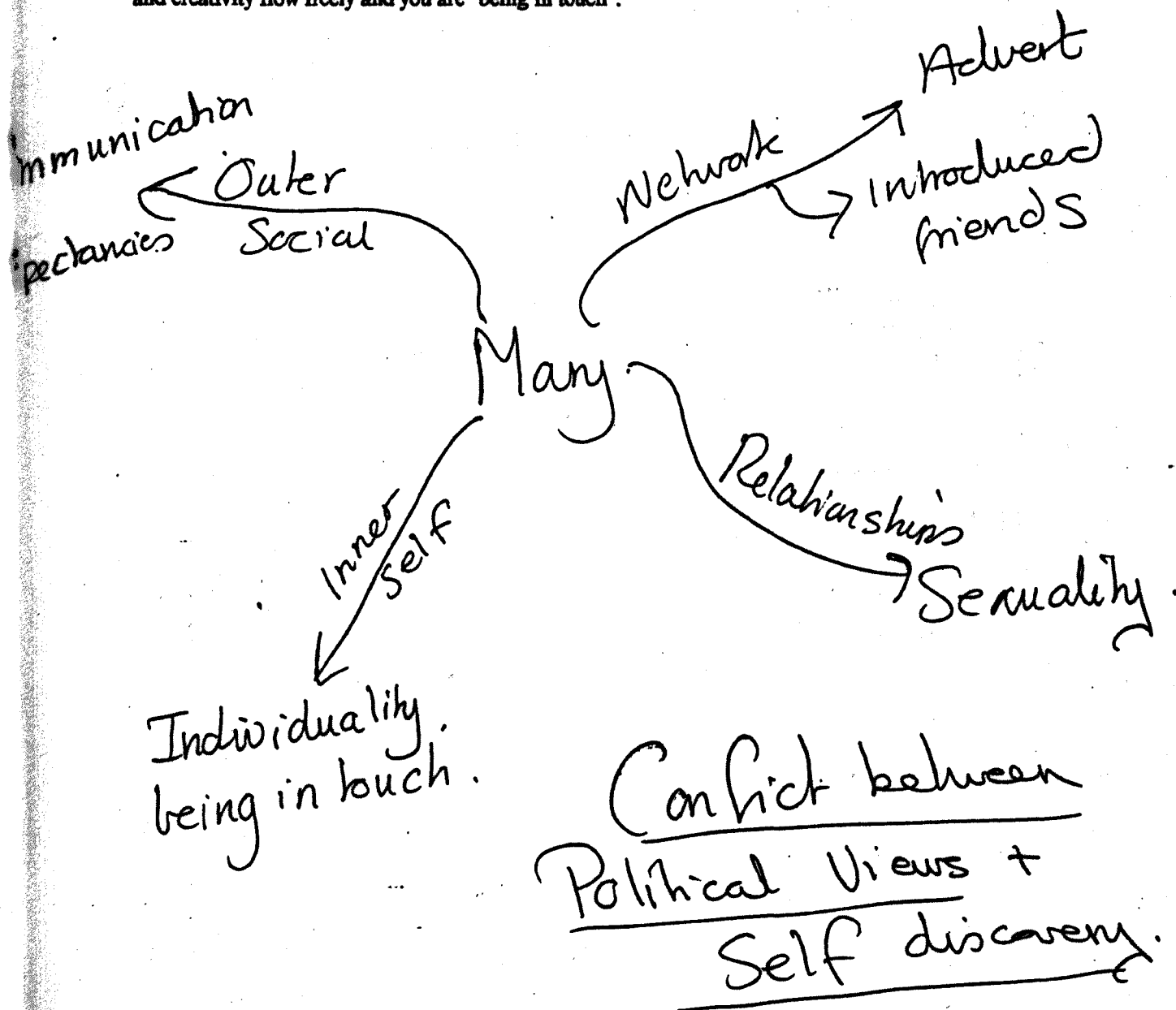
Mary then proceeds to critique the rules of RC, the restrictions on relationships. The niceness of the people who some seem to have lost their spark, the predominance of white middle class. Mary is also suspicious of the white male guru HJ.

Despite these criticisms Mary says she felt that the group did change people, that the group was a catalyst to help people do things. Clio and herself had just been involved in setting up a womens meeting. This confidence for action thys both attribute to the group.

Mary says that she wants to explore herself, other parts of herself that she feel are not being developed. She lists these wants as, the creative side to write and write poetry, the need to explore her sexuality as she believes everyone is bisexual, the need to work and have some money.

At the end of the interview Mary states some very philosophical views. She believes we are all here for a purpose. That we all need to evolve our individuality. She sees knowing herself as not acceting convention. Travel has been an important part of Mary's life to reach these beliefs. Through travelling Mary feels free to be without the constraints of time and social expectancies in a different culture.

Mary also believes in a sense of connection through the expression of individuality, where feelings and creativity flow freely and you are "being in touch".



NB

Similarities

Something Missing
expression
lost dreams
lost emotions

Many
+

Need to look at
Relationships.

Dave

Social
Outer

Inner Self
original self.
being Real
Individuality
being in touch.

→ 'doing things'
expectancies
social roles
Poor Communication
Lack of expression

At Summary

Anton is 27 an ex medical student who has recently returned to England after doing voluntary work in India. He shares rented accommodation and is at present looking for work.

Anton starts his interview with placing his spiritual path as the most important aspect of his life. The teachings of Father B. Griffiths at an Ashram in India has recently been his consolidation of his spiritual beliefs. He continued this by committing himself to Christian voluntary work with abused children in India. Anton describes his return to living in this country being marked with depression loneliness and smoking. Therefore he sought to gain help from various sources. Anton is well aware of different approaches and names specifically the help he engaged. He attended sessions for his depression with a counsellor who used Person centred Counselling developed by Carl Rogers. Anton reports that he found a cognitive behavioural approach to giving up smoking helpful, it made him aware of the psychological and social reasons that he continued to smoke. At the end of this he return to the importance of his spiritual needs and uses the example of using prayer instead of cigarettes. From Anton's contact with medicine he is aware of the British Holistic Medical association definition of mind body and spirit and he continues to use these categories *to understand aspects of his life. so that was kind of depression, mental health taken care of and I was doing stuff for my physical health, swimming.. and my spiritual health was my half an hour prayer which I have kept up with some "falterations" recently.*

He then describes how the relational social part of his life was still causing him problems and it was this plus his need for social contact that brought him to attend the RC fundamentals class. This had created many problems with Anton's participation in RC. RC structures present a very clear rule that you should not socialise with the people you have a co-counselling relationship with. This is for people who meet in the RC network, if you are in contact with this person beforehand then the rule does not apply. Anton describes at great length how during this counselling he was attracted to women he was co-counselling with. After the weekend workshop he started a relationship with one of the women he met there. This has brought them into conflict with RC and Anton has been advised to leave the co-counselling community. He is also uncertain at this point if the relationship will continue anyway. This leads into Anton bringing forth his conflict with learning how to relate. He returns to his spiritual teachings that have always emphasised a spiritual love and not a sexual or carnal love. The problem of morality occur throughout and he mentions a tradition that encourages the sublimation of sexual desires to perfect the relationship of friendship. Anton presents a very clear split between *"we are biological animals, where talking replaces grooming and all of this spiritual, prayer, churches, is all a pretext for being social with each other, picking partners and getting the hugs that we need, it's all. The only reason we do it is to satisfy our human needs. At my most religious I can not love at all, or love to such an extent I'm prepared to give up that person, there has got to be a middle way.*

Anton states that his spiritual search started with his dissatisfaction with life and a questioning mind that asked "Why Me". Also with the fundamental belief in goodness and the each person has this basic quality of goodness in them. Anton says that the main answer he has found in life is from the work on Providence as seen in the Grail quest, it is not to find the object but to ask the questions. In this Anton refers to an inner voice that although is not directly conscience is described as an inner form of morality. Providence is described

as an inner direction. This notion of spirituality has brought Anton into more conflict with the RC theory as he points out the leader Harvey Jenkins dismisses all religions as a way of suppressing individual hurts. Anton continues to criticise RC by noting that it has its own Guru and that it has been listed as a cult. Anton then notes that his discontent with RC could also be that nobody has called him up for a session.

Anton's interview is full of names and quotations. He is an articulate person who is able to relate many of the books and theories he has read. This in resemblance to interviews with the facilitators presents the transcript as a mixture of the personal and impersonal voice. The flow of narrative between life events and theoretical knowledge is well integrated. This is specifically shown by Anton's response to my question the requested he elaborate on an important dream that he mentioned. Anton chose to return to the understanding of love and relate this to a collective understanding presented by Jung. Although the interview brings forward a clear sense of loneliness that he is looking for a relationship and it is here that he mentions any sense of who he might be.

.. "aware of being disenchanted with solo spirituality, ...I would like to go along with someone,... I would like to go along with this person. To be separated by circumstance, to be separated by perversity, I feel if I do it right the inner voice will stay quiet. I can't be a monastic. I don't know if I can face a partnered life either. I think the ideal thing would be a close association with someone with small children, to be involved with children to be around for them. I'm not sure of my own children there seems to be enough around the world, genetically it's not important, not just to be a visiting person, but me Anton."

Can link with
Religious theme
or story
+
Self discovery.

Anton.

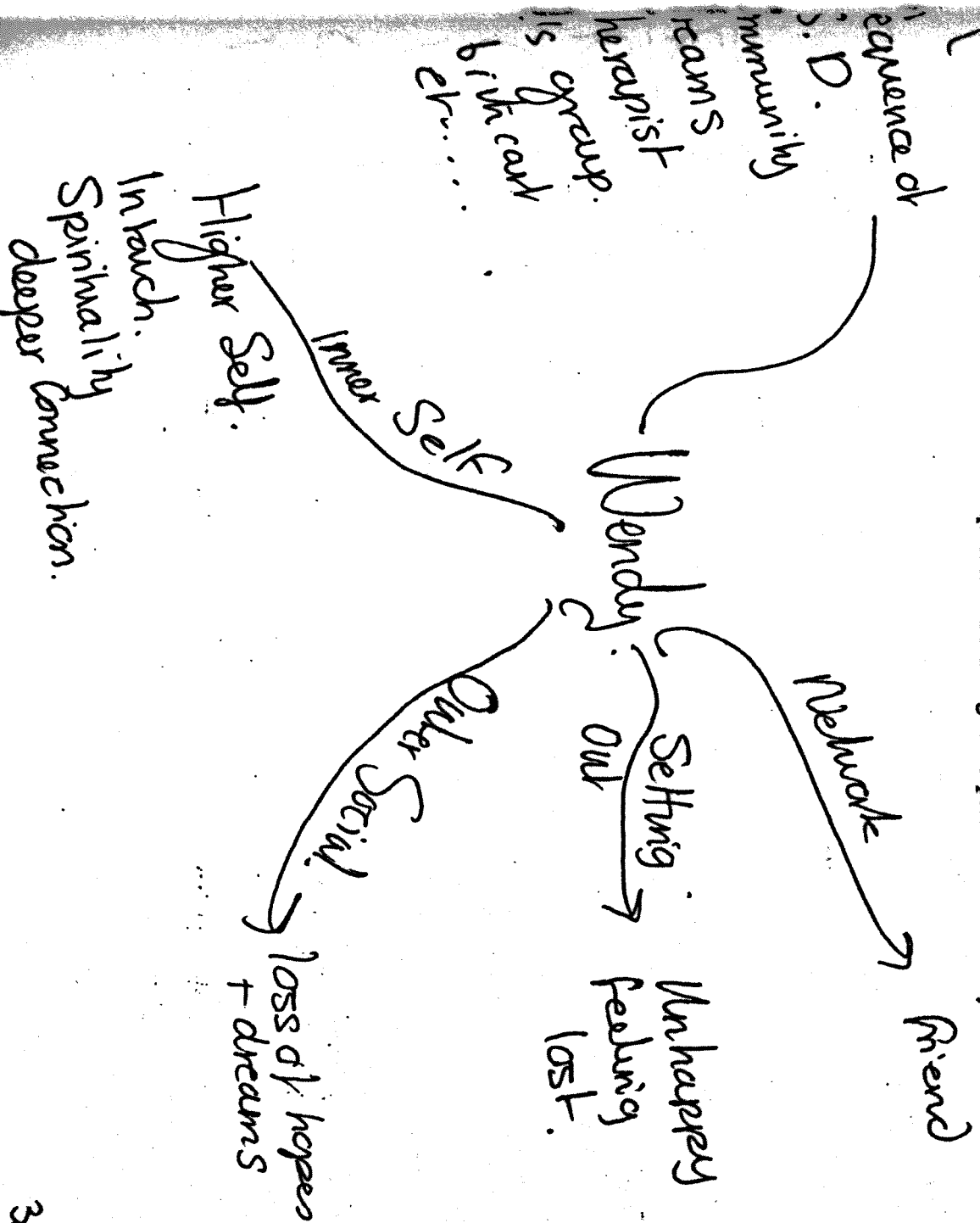
Network

Advertisement

Setting Out

Social
Relationship
Contact.

Wendy is 27 and lives in shared rented accommodation in the city. She is presently unemployed doing voluntary work in the mental health field. A friend recommended that she join the RC group as she was unhappy and needed to express her emotions safely. Wendy thought that this was a good idea as she was feeling lost. Wendy describes herself as needing to have direction which in the past she has been able to gain from her involvement in a therapeutic community and from other sources. She misses that group feeling a sense of belonging that she knew 'The RC group' would provide. She was aware that the group would practice games to get to know people quickly that she describes on a much more real and genuine level in contrast to the superficial level that occurs in other situations. She feels these groups bring together like minded people with a common vision. Wendy has a history of being involved with many sorts of alternative practices. Her first contact with psychotherapy was in her teenage years when she became depressed and describes having a breakdown. A GP referred her to a therapeutic community. It is from this experience that she recognises the value of group to gain a sense of belonging and solidarity. Over the past few years Wendy has engaged in psychic fairs where she attended a dream workshop. She continues to see a gestalt therapist on an individual basis. She belonged to a women's group where they practised meditation, understanding natural cycles and rhythms and relating this to women's menstrual flow. She has had her birth chart done and was understanding herself by a book that looks at the goddesses to understand parts of yourself. Wendy has also completed an experiential week at Findhorn community where she feels she has become more in touch with her higher self and her spiritual needs. This higher self she describes as the recognition of the collective consciousness and the awareness of guides on the other side. This is felt as a presence. Hence her spirituality has brought her into contact with a deeper connection with her dreams and instincts away from the practicalities of life that usually fill her head. Wendy sees all these things as helping her to change. Change in the way she relates and coming to terms with the loss she felt when her mother died. Wendy says she spent a lot of time alone as a child and she is now learning that sadness is a balance in life. Pain leads to change and the RC group provides the space to lift the lid of the pressure cooker. Wendy sees herself as trying to become an adult, to have a sexual relationship and learn to balance her life with work, social, play and personal parts. She also feels she is more able to be herself and question and challenge the expectations of her family.



CEY

Focus of Groups.

Emotional Release.

RC/Seed/Wise/LH

Techniques to encourage release

Affirmations

RC LH

Visualisations }

Wise Seed LH

Guided Imagery }

Meditation

Wise Seed LH

Colour

Wise LH

Partner exercises

RC Wise Seed LH

Ritualised markers

Relaxing Music.

RC Wise Seed LH

Candles.

RC Wise LH

Incense.

RC Wise Seed LH

Chants

Wise Seed LH

Playing Music.

Seed LH.

Dream Workshop / Seed weekend.

6th June 1992.

The weekend was held in a community hall in a small town in south of England.

I arrived a few minutes late and was led thru a series of passages to a large, comfortable, empty, light room.

Eleven people were already seated on the floor with various cushions as support in a circle. The correct attire had been chosen by everyone - everyday casual but clothes to feel comfortable to move in.

Eleven people consisted of two couples known to each other and introduced to the group by a member of the group who had attended on several occasions. The leader of the group was present with his partner and two sons (discovered later on). Two women

members experienced attenders and

The circle was to engage in the initial round - Name, why here, what expected from the weekend, little about yourself. As I had missed several introductions I was at a disadvantage and when the appropriate silence arose between turns I thought it was probably 'my go'. The round was undirected and flowed to anyone. After everyone had said a little about themselves the group engaged in a few 'trust' like exercises in smaller groups. Firstly working individually, then pairs, then small groups of 3-4. Very quickly I felt drawn into the comfort of working in this way, and willingly engaged the physical contact of letting my group members 'push me'.

The real women took her turn.

The leader called the group together and held a full session, in circle for anyone ~~not~~ to share their 'seed'. Several members did. Major difficulty seemed to arise from the two new couples, who had worked together. It appeared that one couple felt this group would not help them at the present time. →

The day ended with everyone sharing a pub evening meal except the couple who had decided to leave.

We returned to the room which now had the most beautiful summer evening light with the setting sun. In a quiet relaxed way people continued to share some of the issues that

It was all quite exhausting - laying around supporting.

Again the supporters remained in close contact holding, shaking. I found it very strange when she started making loud 'gut' noises. The noise evolved around the difficulty of 'step' relationships with step sons. Or being on the outside.

At this stage end of Sat I beginning to feel very drained and tired, aware of how intense everybody was feeling.

I felt very aware of how difficult it must be to enter this situation in a couple relationship. I felt the woman was listening to her husband's seed in a disappointed way, noting that perhaps she should have had prior or advance knowledge of the problems that her husband was discussing.

This social occasion seemed important for the intimate cohesion of the group as a whole and appeared to create a relaxed internal attitude.

My turn: I laid down and the other group members settled themselves around me.

My tears continued thru' all the lunch time Ebb + How is probably an apt description.

The last member of the group seed. hard skill - very blocked not feeling.

Began to hold him very close, surprised myself about how physical, naturally wanted to hold, careen past, I wanted to be in the role of the supporter.

My turn: Faced with great meditation many of the issues brought up by people before love, marriage, separating, loss, ~~was~~ had brought forth many feelings. One of the terms used had "shook in my mind" "lost in a pool of tears" Like Alice. My fear of crying was so I couldn't stop surfaced along with the tears and once started couldn't stop especially with sympathetic support from my group members who I ~~was~~ felt universally close to. ① the substitute mother, holding and caring for me, the other the possible young understanding lover.

MUSIC important. Background but also to mask other groups noises. Setting the scene. Instrumental relaxing meditative.

20/10/92

1st meeting of F.R.C.

At ... flat. Part of large Victorian house in ...

before meeting phone call from member to arrange lift.

Arrived with fellow participant.

Gathered in circle with odd assortment of chairs in ... kitchen/lounge.

12 members mixed gender equal ♀ ♂

2 fellow helpers ♂ + ♀

... running course.

Round: name, why here, a little about self + interest in R.C.

Mixed interests + professions.

Homeopath.

works with children.

Student midwife.

ex-medic now voluntary work.

work psych day centre.

social services

Age range late 20's to mid 40's.

Shared commitment to "alternative fashion" collection of 2 hand look. Not worried about

The first group felt very intrusive and I began to wonder why I was. Firstly having to pick up (A) which not convenient, the car journey to had already involved sharing of history. What I taught, sociology, the role of medicine (A) ex-medic now working with health often in voluntary capacity. Applying for new job third world connections.

Found house and was met by a strange young man who wanted to ask us why we were doing R.C. + wished us luck. Sign on door, made way up to rooms in vast rambling house.

Everyone had already arrived and been reading my letter which had not to send the letters out but to give out at first meeting. Hence when I was in people knew who I was, as they were waiting for me.

When it came to my turn in the row obvious to do some research.

appearance.

1st in round experienced with RC said
it was good to get back to the 'RC
Community'

Approx 4 others had previous experience
of R.C. **NAME GAME**

explaining fundamentals of RC

Rules *

Codes *

RC book

Displaying + illustrating "discharge"

One member discussed issue of "everybody
does their best with the situation they are
in. To view others with respect positive
+ with love." She mentioned a child
abuser - surely they had not done their best.
could not be viewed in a positive way.
Took a difficult discussion - abuse the
only way learnt to individual often
abused themselves, no other way known.
I mentioned though I was not prepared
to listen to an abusers account - my
irrational response to those who hurt my
children was not to understand.

The emphasis was upon being interviewed
after the group I had said + she said
that the group was not being researched
and that the group remained confidential

I was very dismayed at her descrip-
tion of my role after our previous discussion.
It appeared that my autobiographical
role in the group had been dismissed.
This made me feel very covert, hid
my real intentions and I did not wish
to take issue here and jeopardise
the whole relationship.

My feelings of why was I here was
further fuelled by the rules of RC
where members are not allowed to
discuss the content of what goes on
within group with each other.
The creation of a safe environment
in which to explore ones emotions
were paramount and I felt that
the research would not be welcomed.
When I asked if anyone wanted to
ask any questions I was asked to
the time now was for RC and no

The child abuse example was challenging to the basic tenets of R.C. But asked by Miche to give it time to evolve and expand during the course.

② RC practice

3 mins each way.
to look at counsellor and discuss what you see - can use physical contact.
- Myself + partner of 401s.
describe him looks hair. hands.
he sat listening + looking.
he then spent couple of minutes observing me without speech, then last minute started to talk about how it was good to have someone to listen to him.

Group shared responses to being counselled + being counsellor.
how hard it was to LISTEN.

Break - Water toilets
encouraged not to partake in any artificial

to discuss the research. I said
The rules of R.C. further confused my feelings of how ~~was caught~~ ^{enter on to any} ~~circumstances~~ ^{we doing here} ~~in the group~~ ^{practising}.
I was not feeling that well and during the evening ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~feelings of~~ ^{feelings of} ~~struggle~~ ^{and nausea} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~exacerbated~~ ^{of the} ~~by~~ ^{continuous} ~~resurgence~~ ^{smell of garlic}.
I really did not want to be there to listen to anybody. ~~to be there~~

Despite rule of no relationships or socialising outside group it became apparent that many people in the group had connections.

3 friends

1 couple living together.

2 close previous contact with Mic

stimulant before during R.C.
End Sound.
What I have learnt this evening
something good about myself.
Feeling my work even though I feel
permanence at the moment.
→ learnt complexity of R.C. also to
think about.

Homework Read passage on listening
to arrange 30 min
co-counselling session.

I was surprised at end of group
feeling of cohesiveness - but no
response to listening. (A) Where
I took him home even though out
my way.

? role of group assistants

MICHELETTAS

29.10.92

Arrived at large roundling

old building N. Oxford

picked up some autumn

leaves from the front steps as she opened

the door. had through doors + corridors

to large room lined with books

Subtle side lighting - chairs in circle

incense burning

Candle in middle with representations

of autumn - added leaves

Group of 6, several unable to attend

Introducing Round

Name + title about yourself

General conversation about children

where you are at the moment work life

Intro to MICHELETTAS. Session

Angel Sward Change Direction Protection

Spiritual - materialistic

Astro

Bernice

Claudia

Celia

Sonia

Margaret

Me

Suzie

Bernice

All Mothers

German

Swedish

International component

acupuncture : Sell emp.

clinical psych : just finished course

cohort loger / Alexander Technique : self emp

Yoga teacher : self emp

Introduced my research interest

autobiography V. DiMault Grouped

not know anything - and I had

discussed across to group previously

and had decided that my membership of group was valued thus my autobiographical approach. But I felt that this had placed me in an awkward position re introducing research. As I talked about my research the focus was placed by 'me' upon the interviews not the content of the group. I stated consistent negotiation - production of knowledge - confidentiality - anonymity.

Mixed response I needed to think. I did not like idea of 'object of study'. I responded that hopefully this research challenged idea of 'object'. Support from 'me' to evaluate group from a different perspective. BUT to leave this session so that I get on with group.

Fell v. uncomfortable / intruder / outsider not really a member / covert.

Angel Cards

Talk in pairs light + dark aspects of group why group

1 SURVEILLATION

This is where you lie down comfortably on floor in room and quietly presents an idea for you to think + develop in your imagination

① LIFE EVENTS OVER THE YEAR

Having spent several minutes concentrating upon this turn musical sound asked us to draw these images on the paper

- oil pencils provided

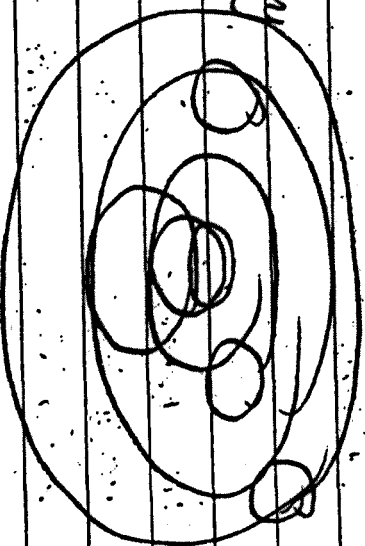
self slightly removed from members maintaining time + initiating questions.

① Symbolised by

Many changes
growing

Strength

connections + development



② where you would like to be NUTURED - MOST SAFE

after
each question followed S-10 min
thought
then 5 min - for drawing

2) Need to be held - environment important

landscape scene sunset, hills
ideal



Rock type figures being held

③ What images draw upon to
promote change

Other themes

Childbirth - fears women

like stages children leaving

Relationships - Marriage - endings

Represented by powerful images
beginnings

Very still/peaceful group / calm
Time appeared very long

Sharing

Own drawings

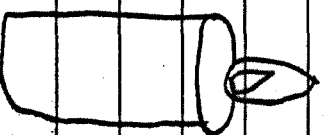
③ Candle

meditative

thought

being

staying still



min of this light
over the year
focus of this light

Word to Sum up the Season

DISTANCE

MEDITATIVE

VALUES - CHANGE

END CIRCLE

hands

(R) Down }
(L) up }
palm.

Energy transfer

chant... OM 3x

Blow the Candle + pass the light
onto those who need it

The appendices for
Chapter 3 have been
excluded at the request of
the university

Appendices for Chapter Six.

Selection of photocopied advertisements

- **Networks, alternative sites, fairs.** p.1
- **Reflections in alternative health.**
 - The Mix and Match of knowledge.** p.2
 - Spiritual emphasis.** p.3
 - Alternative health Centres.**
 - Reflections of the groups.** p.4-6
- **Reflections in alternative education.** p.7-8
 - Creative therapies** p.8-10
 - personal growth** p.11
 - residential and holiday centres.** p.12-13.

SUNDAY 23rd OCTOBER 1994

THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE,
KENSINGTON HIGH STREET, LONDON W.8

CELEBRATION OF HEALING

A complementary therapy exhibition
10.30am. to 7.00pm. £4 entrance
Workshops by Lilla Bek,
Judy Fraser & Audrey Murr-Copland
Lectures by Dr Kai Kermani,
Darryl O'Keeffe, Ken Young, Judy Fraser,
John Asquith & Zhixing Wang.
Demonstrations, Music and
around 60 different therapists exhibiting.

THE HEALING REVUE

An evening of fun and "light" entertainment
7.30 to 9.30pm. £8 entrance
with Compare John Asquith,
Singer Sharon Small,
Concert Pianist Maya Dokic,
Alternative G.P. Dr Lillian Pinkerton,
New Age Poet Percy Vere and
Doyen of the classical music social set
Grandpa Harry Asquith

During "The Healing Revue" the Celebration of Healing Draw winners will be announced. Draw tickets cost 50p, and as each ticket entitles the holder to half price entry for the exhibition, every ticket is a winner. However, there are additional prizes of: A CRUISE ALONG THE NILE WITH TEMPLE MEDICINE; (Value £925). A £500 SECOND AID COURSE VOUCHER; A £300 NFSSH HEALING DEVELOPMENT COURSE VOUCHER; A £100 VOUCHER FOR QIGONG TUITION; and four £25 VOUCHERS FOR NFSSH RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND TAPES.
For further details please send an S.A.E. to Healing International, 35 Oakdale Rd. London E11 4DL quoting "i-to-i offer" or ring 061 558 2930

• POTTERY •
• CLAIRVOYANTS • HYPNOTHERAPY •
• JEWELLERY • HAIRWRAPS • CERAMICS •
• ASTROLOGY • CANDLES • MUSIC • CRYSTALS •
• KATS • BOOKS • AURA PHOTOGRAPHY •
• PALMISTRY • AROMATHERAPY • CLOTHES •

— OVER 120 STANDS —

CRAFT AND NEW AGE FAIRS

ADMISSION £2 • CONCESSIONS £1 • CHILDREN FREE
• FREE LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS •

SAT 1st October	11AM - 7PM
Sun 2nd October	11AM - 6PM

AT QUEEN ELIZABETH CENTRE, WINBOURNE, DORSET

SAT 26th November	11AM - 7PM
SUN 27th November	11AM - 6PM

AT THE RIVERSIDE CENTRE, COWICK STREET, EXETER

SOME STANDS STILL AVAILABLE!
FOR FULL LIST OF '94 EVENTS PLEASE PHONE
Tel / Fax: 061 620 6975

footnote 2.
FAIRS.

- OVER 100 EXHIBITORS • WORKSHOPS •
- LECTURES • DEMONSTRATIONS •
- VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT •
- MEDITATION ROOM •

British and European Festival for

THE SPIRITUAL MIND AND BODY

22 & 23 October 1994

Incorporating complementary therapists and
the National Federation of Spiritual Healers

Open Daily from 11am to 7pm
Admission Adults £3.00, Senior Citizens, Unemployed and
Disabled £2.50 Children (under 12 years) £2.00 which includes
entrance to most lectures (not workshops)

PRESENTS SOME OF THE
TOP EUROPEAN HEALERS
FROM THE UK:

Jill Rakusen
Giving Voice
Journeying towards
Freedom

Anita Harney
Colour Healer
Motivation
through Colour

Mike Robinson
Karmic Healer
Understanding
Past Lives

Aura cleaning
Pam Brotherton
from New Light

Make contact with your
Higher Self through
Kinesiology

Tansen
Universal Dances
of Peace

Equinox
The Astrology Shop



an
reiki
yoga
voice
dance
tai chi
drama
aikido
chiatsu
healing
past life
massage
iridology
astrology
herbalism
regression
feldenkrais
shamanism
reflexology
kinesiology
acupuncture
acupressure
mediumship
and readings
aromatherapy
aura photography
karmic photography
alexander technique

THE ARMITAGE CENTRE

A
BRIAN KELLY FAIRS
EVENT

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
DO YOU WANT TO GROW?
COME AND MEET THE PEOPLE WHO CAN!

SUFFOLK



NEW AGE FAIR

IPSWICH
TOWN HALL

Sun 17 April

10am-6pm

3rd great year!

TALKS, WORKSHOPS & DEMONSTRATIONS ALL DAY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT, FOOD FOR VEGETARIANS, LIVE MUSIC

ADMISSION ON THE DOOR £1.00

ENQUIRIES: TEL/FAX (07671) 315680

IT HELPS WITH THE FIGHT, IF YOU LIVE IN THE LIGHT!

MOOREHEAD ROAD
FALGOWFIELD
MANCHESTER

Stand space now available
for RFI programme and
bookings from send a c to
The Secretary, Hawthorn House, 5 The Hawthorns,
Redgate's Edge, Macclesfield, Cheshire M13 2JZ.
Tel/Fax: 061-620 6975

THE TRINITY CENTRE

for Natural Health and Healing

Established 1984
Registered Charity No. 282945
The New Awareness Trust

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS MARCH 1996 AND APRIL 1996

MARCH

Fri 1st, Sat 2nd and Sunday 3rd	Reiki Masters Course	Yamuna Wynne
Saturday 9th	Yoga Workshop	Elaine Fletcher
Friday 22nd	INSIGHT: A Talk and Discussion	Julie Soskin
Sunday 17th	Basic Astrology Course (1)	Sue Stacey
Sunday 24th	Astrology and the Emerging Feminine	Paula Muse
Sunday 31st	Learning To Trust The Intuition	Dr Christine Page
Sat 23rd	Yucca	Elaine Fletcher

APRIL

Sat 13th, Sun 14th	Reiki Healing 1st Degree	Yamuna Wynne
Sunday 19th	Basic Astrology (4)	Sue Stacey
Sunday 24th	Drum Journeys	Gary Newland
Sunday 28th	Awakening from the Dream with the 13 Moons	Amaa Ra

LEARNING TO TRUST THE INTUITION

with

Dr Christine Page

Sunday 31st March 1996.

The Aquarian Age asks that we become more conscious of, and responsible for, our thoughts, recognising that they are the seed of our actions. When these thoughts are based on intuitive perceptions we know that our reality reveals our inner truth and that of the Universe.

AWAKENING FROM THE DREAM WITH THE 13 MOONS

with

Amaa Ra

Sunday 28th April 1996

The Dreamspell was brought into being by Jose Arguelles on 26th July 1972 based on his research of the Mayan Sacred Calendar of the 13 Moons.

DRUM JOURNEYS

with

Gary Newland

Sunday 24th April 1996

"When the rhythm is right, you feel it with all your senses; it's in your mind, in your body, in both places... you don't fight it, but instead you allow yourself to be propelled by this insistent but friendly feeling... you fly like a bird when the rhythm is right."
Mickey Hart. *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*, 1990.

ASTROLOGY AND THE EMERGING FEMININE

with

Paula Muse

Sunday 24th March 1996 For women only

Astrology has its roots in Ancient Chaldean - or Sumerian - the land of Fertile Crescent, as it was once known. In these ancient times, the Great Life Force behind creation was worshipped as a feminine Being and modern Astrology is currently heralding a re-awakening of this Feminine Power.

footnote: 12
The Trinity Centre.
Programme 1996.

THE MIX AND
MATCH OF
KNOWLEDGE.

**The White Dove Centre
Peace *** Love *** Light**

Recreation Hall
Main Road, Long Hanborough
(formerly The British Legion Hall)
Shirley Olive (0993) 705255



1993 Programme

Every Wednesday Evening at 7.30pm

There is healing available before services at 6.45pm and after services.

20th January	Service with Clairvoyance	Shirley Olive (Witney)
27th January	Awareness of Spiritual Healing Healing Workshop - All Welcome	
3rd February	Service with Clairvoyance	Pam Soames (Witney)
10th February	Opening our Spiritual Awareness Workshop - All Welcome	Shirley Olive (Witney)
17th February	Self Healing - Chinese Art	Barbara Nottingham (Witney)
24th February	Lecture & Demonstration Massage	Michael Clark (Stonesfield)
3rd March	Service with Clairvoyance	Tom King (Reading)
10th March	Sand Readings - Clairvoyance	Susan Jennings (Banbury)
17th March	No Meeting	
24th March	Flower Clairvoyance (Bring a flower)	Shirley Olive (Witney)
31st March	Health Kinesiology	Pet Ward (Carterton)
7th April	Service with Clairvoyance	Jack Fairhurst (Carterton)
14th April	Our Experiences of Life	Olive Rudlin (Stonesfield)
21st April	Spiritual Awareness Workshop Having a go of what you know.	
28th April	Brahma Kumari Meditation	Mark Hooper (Oxford)
	Service with Clairvoyance	Lucy Hale

footnote 13.

Spiritual
healing +
health!

footnote 14 + 15.

**National Federation
of Spiritual Healers**



**SPIRITUAL
HEALING
HOLISTIC
WAY TO
HEALTH**

HEALING

In spiritual healing energy is channelled through the hands of the healer to the recipient. This energy is known by many names, some call it divine energy, others the energy of the life force.

A healing session lasts 20 to 30 minutes. The person receiving healing is required to simply sit and relax while the healer works. The energy coming through the healer's hand may be felt as warmth or coolness occasionally as tingling, and sometimes not at all. Most people feel very relaxed and peaceful after a session.

Healing can be beneficial whatever the nature of the persons suffering, whether it be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual.

Spiritual healing is available at the Trinity Centre at the following times:

CALL IN - NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

Monday afternoons between 1.30 - 3.30 p

Donations welcome

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons
between 1.30 - 4.00 pm


An appointment session lasts 30 minutes
costs £3.00

To make an appointment telephone Janet Crane
on 0206 442255. 4734517

THE TRINITY CENT
12 & 21 Trinity Street
Colchester
CO1 1JN



The S.E.E.D. Institute
10, Magnolia Way, Fleet,
Hants GU13 9JZ England.
Tel/Fax: (0252) - 626448

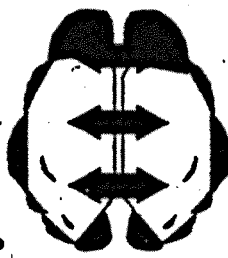


Committed to the Unfoldment of The True Self
(accredited by The Monroe Institute to distribute Hemi-Sync®
for the facilitation of Hemispheric Synchronisation)

Frontal region

Left Hemisphere:

- R/H touch
- Temporal
- Speech
- Thought
- Analysis
- Maths/Science



Right Hemisphere:

- L/H touch
- Spatial
- Language
- Feeling
- Intuition
- Art/Music

Section through brain - seen from above

Send s.a.s. (large A4, quoting I-40-103) for Overviews of:
Hemi-Sync Tapes, Self-Development Workshops & Home-Studies
and Mental Development Courses.

*Hemi-Sync is a TM of The Monroe Institute, Va. U.S.A.

SELF-EXPLORATION - EDUCATION - DEVELOPMENT

footnote: 16

POWER²

IS ABOUT MUTUAL POWER WITH INTEGRITY

SPRING/SUMMER WORKSHOPS IN LONDON AND ESSEX

- CREATING EMPOWERING RELATIONSHIPS
- THE POWER TO LOVE THE CHILD WITHIN
 - EFFECTIVE COUNSELLING SKILLS
 - THE POWER TO LET GO OF GUILT
 - INTRODUCTION TO NLP
 - NLP PLUS

footnote: 17
Flyer collect
at Trinity Cen

INNER JOURNEY WORKSHOPS
with GLENDA FINDLOW in Cheshire

Enjoy a day with like-minded people
learning how to love yourself and change your life.

Sept 18th Inner Child
Oct 16th Learning to Love the Self
Nov 13th Increase your Self-Esteem
Dec 4th Tools for Change

Other workshops - Relaxation and Stress Management,
Creative Visualisation, Fear of Flying, Self-Confidence.

Brochure from:
Mrs G.C. Findlow B. Ed. (Hons) D.H.P. M.I.S.M.
Poynton Centre of Light
10 Clifford Road, Poynton, Cheshire SK12 111Y
(Tel: 0625 873779)

footnote: 18
Kindred Spirit Spring 19



The Holistic School of Systems Therapy

Offers Modular Training in

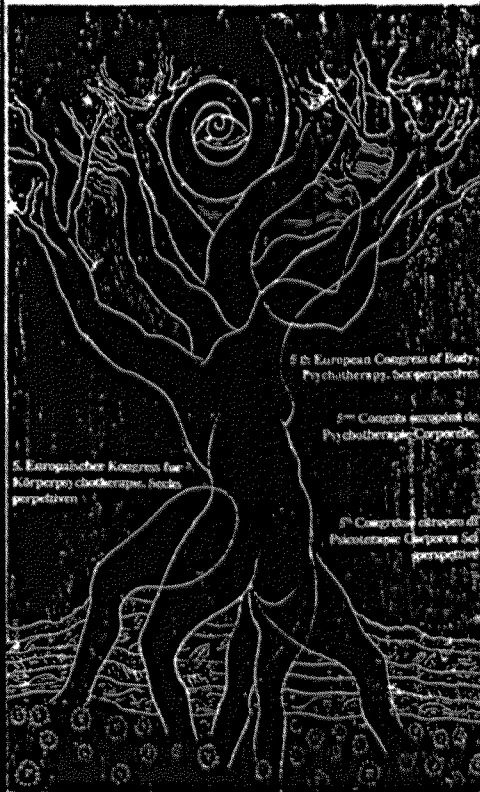
Psychodynamic Bodywork

Systems Therapy is based on the work of Wilhelm Reich regarding life energy, and on the further development of his concepts by Gerda Boyesen and others in the field of Biodynamic therapy. It treats the inter-functioning sub-systems of the human system holistically. It focuses on the physical, the breathing, the vegetative emotional, and the mental systems, and sees the human system in relationship with the larger systems (society, living earth, the cosmos) in which it functions.

Psychodynamic Bodywork is the basis for body psychotherapy and is a profession in its own right. We offer the training in four certificated modules, over three years. The first (10-week) module is self-contained. Each module is designed to equip the graduate with skills which will enable him/her to practise a well defined therapeutic discipline at the end of each stage of training. They follow each other in progressive sequence.

5TH EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF BODY-PSYCHOTHERAPY

NEW PERSPECTIVES - NEW PSYCHOTHERAPY



MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
OF BODY-PSYCHOTHERAPY

footnote 19:

footnote 20:

WHAT IS PSYCHOSYNTHESIS?

Psychosynthesis is a form of psychotherapy. Its aim is to help people to realise their true spiritual nature and to utilise this discovery effectively in everyday life.

It is a means through which people can live out their creative potential, increase their ability to function in the world, and improve the quality of all their relationships.

Unlike some other therapies psychosynthesis has no fixed idea about what someone 'should' be like, indeed, quite the opposite, it values very strongly the difference and individuality of us all and enables each person to discover and develop their own inner resources, values and direction.

Seamlessness

- Trance and fingertip channeling
- Psycho-spiritual healing and coaching
- Healing circles in Oxford and London
- Workshops
- Tarot readings

Seamlessness

Seamlessness is the absence of pain, anxiety, suffering, struggle and burden. It is abundance, health, well-being and synchronicity in all of your life. It is you, living as your whole self in harmony, peace plenty and fulfilment. It is living in conscious Oneness with the entire Universe in celebration of its power, energy and love.

Seamlessness

is also releasing the layers of pretence, defence and denial - such as illness, poverty, fear, guilt and blame - with which we learn to cover our true selves as we grow into adults. It's discovering that in the letting go is our true safety and our joy. It is dissolving the need for barriers and boundaries, defences and divisions that keep us separate from ourselves.

footnote 21.

Polarity Therapy

with Krysia Gallien

Course fee £30 Day 15-16 10.30am - 5.30pm Bascombe Hall

- Polarity uses:
- hands on contact
 - balanced nutritional principles
 - polarity exercises
 - attitudinal change to stimulate the body's own healing responses

- You will learn:
- how to develop your healing abilities
 - how to stimulate healing in another
 - how to recognise energy blocks
 - how to balance the chakras
 - a series of contact points for relaxation and general well-being

The polarity therapist channels life energy and guides its flow. Anyone can learn this simple but powerful healing technique. It relieves pain and stress. It induces profound relaxation. Use it safely on children, the elderly and even animal pets. Offer your healing touch to family and friends.

Krysia Gallien has worked in the holistic health field since 1975 teaching yoga, reflexology, Esalen massage. She has taught classes on the use of natural therapies through adult education and has been a practising polarity therapist since 1987. Krysia is a member of the American Polarity Therapy Association and teaches with the Health Training Group. She is the founder and director of Circumference Holistic Center in the West Island.

Advance deposit to ensure place advisable. Write to Sheila Johns, Looe Light Sea Centre, Reachways, Church Street, East Looe, Cornwall PL13 1BY. Telephone 0503 262859.

Footnote 23.

Footnote 26.

the Heart of the Matter

A personal development workshop
regal Yoga and Psychotherapeutic techniques
with
Lishanne Webster and Nick Price

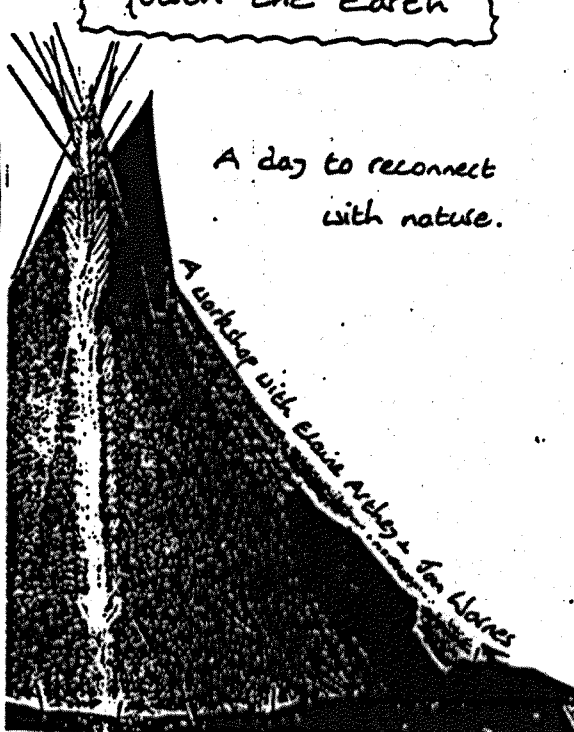
at
Glen Garm Castle, Isle of Mull
November 1st - 6th 1994
£375

5 days residential. Small intensive group
Cozy log fires. Wild seas
Full meditations. Excellent vegetation food

Footnote 24.

Footnote 25.

Touch the Earth



A day to reconnect
with nature.

Sunday, June 5th 10 - 5pm.

SACRED
JOURNEYS
Healing the Earth
Healing Ourselves

Gatekeeper
Trust

Programme for 1994

Journey into Kinship
with the Earth

Footnote 27.

Regular courses and classes March–June

The Alexander's Lexique - with Paul Smith

The Alexander's Lexique is a new thing the world has never seen. It is a book of words and phrases, from the most common to the most rare, in all the languages of the world. It is a book of words and phrases, from the most common to the most rare, in all the languages of the world. It is a book of words and phrases, from the most common to the most rare, in all the languages of the world.

Alexander's Lexique, that is, a replacement with ease, Small, Handy, Convenient, and useful, make this a great book for the traveler.

10 June - 29 June
at 7.00 per day
at 7.00 per day
at 7.00 per day
at 7.00 per day

150
150
150
150

Deal with Sensitive Data. Securely.

I feel that you are not "born" of this great mechanism.
 It calls the mind and balance the most living to create
 harmony with nature and so disactive internal conflict and
 tension. It is based on the concept of Chi or internal energy
 and when done correctly builds the integrity and circulates
 it to all of the body. The source and balance will be taught
 that provides a high degree of relaxation, balance, the dignity
 and a new freedom and even in every part of the body and
 mind, but not least, in Chi, an ultimate you feel good.

19 April-20 June
 5.45 pm-7.15 pm
 7.45 pm-9.00 pm
 Dates to be announced
 commencing 1 Jan.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Summer Programme 1993

30 ALBANY ROAD
STRATFORD UPON AVON
WARWICKSHIRE. CV37 6PG

(0789) 292052

Lifeways

- ARTS
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- ENVIRONMENT
- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

30 ALBANY ROAD

STRATFORD UPON AVON
WARWICKSHIRE. CV37 6PG

(0789) 292052

FLINT HOUSE

**Natural Health
Clinic and
Learning Centre**

Spring/
Summer
1993

41 High Street
Leves

Fast Sussex

B72L

Tel: 0273 473388

entrance in

By War Memorial

for note 28.

[illegible]

Babhy Massage with Sally Cranfield

You will be shown how to massage your baby gently and safely. Massage can soothe, aid digestion, relieve colic and protect your baby into a better sleep pattern. It is an enjoyable experience for both giver and receiver. The simple exercises will be taught in small groups, with or without babies. Caring, health enhancing. There are two opportunities: Wednesday 7th June and a special Sunday 1st November. Bookings are essential. See the calendar.



Alternatives

Spring Programme 1993
St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London

Alternatives of St. James's is dedicated to creative spiritual alternatives to currently accepted Western thought. Our purpose is to provide a friendly atmosphere in which to take the best of these ideas. We are dedicated to the freedom of each individual to choose their own path of personal and spiritual growth.

MONDAY LECTURES

All at 7pm. Entrance free to all lectures. A £5 wage.
£3 unwaged. The evenings usually end at about
9pm. Food and drinks are available.

March 1

Ancient Futures

HELENA NORBERG-HODGE

Tonight's speaker has lived and worked for over eighteen years in the small Himalayan country of Ladakh, also known as Little Tibet. Ladakh still remains relatively untouched by western 'progress' and sustains an ancient culture from which we can learn many things about ecology, spirituality, community, gender roles and the roots of violence.

Helena Norberg-Hodge is the founder and director of the Ladakh Project and the Ladakh Ecological Development Group, an indigenous group which won the 1986 Right Livelihood Award. She is the author of 'Ancient Futures' and formerly taught at the University of California.

March 8

The Holy Grail, the Fisher King and the Waste Land

ROGER WOOLGER

Various thought to have been created by the heretical Cathars, Celtic Initiates or the Knights Templar, the Holy Grail and its legends continue to haunt and inspire us. Is the myth Christian or a Pagan rite? A story or a secret teaching? What is its deeper meaning? Using colour slides, Roger Woolger will blend esoteric history and Jungian psychology to show how the story of the lost Grail can help illuminate and heal the spiritual malaise of our time.

Roger Woolger is an author, teacher and Jungian therapist. As well as having written on past life therapy, 'Other Lives, Other Selves', and 'The Goddess Within', he has been a student of Grail Mysteries for many years.

March 15

Living Truthfully

DINA GLOUBERMAN

Despite the promises of our childhood fairy tales, of our careers advisors and of the therapy movement, most of us do not seem to 'get it right' and live happily ever after. Living truthfully means piercing the fog created by hopeful expectations and myths - and finding our own house of truth. We may find that there is more pain and more healing than we thought possible.

Dina Glouberman is founder/director of the Skyros Centre and Institute, consulting Editor of I-to-I magazine and a psychotherapist. Author of the popular 'Life Choices and Life Changes through Imagework'. She is currently working on her new book 'Living Truthfully'.

March 22

Living Myth -

Spring Equinox Celebration

PLAYBACK THEATRE

Do not miss this performance evening as the members of Playback Theatre listen to our stories of spiritual and psychological transformation - and then play them back to us. This psychodramatic technique is a wonderful method for achieving insight, release and fun.

Playback Theatre was originated by the New York psychodramatist Jonathan Fox and founded in London by Julie Lacy. The ensemble of performers comprises a dynamic cross-cultural blend of actors, musicians and therapists.

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY TALK

March 24

The Voice of the Earth -

An Exploration of Ecopsychology

THEODOR ROSZAK

Coinciding with the publication of his path-breaking new book we are delighted to host this evening's talk by one of our leading alternative

March 29

The Way of the Shaman

JONATHAN HORWITZ

Shamanism is humanity's oldest tradition for healing, problem-solving and maintaining balance in the individual, as well as in society and nature. This evening one of the most respected European teachers of shamanism introduces some of its core ideas and methods with particular reference to the Nordic tradition.

Jonathan Horwitz is a teaching and field research associate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies which is dedicated to the recovery, preservation and teaching of shamanic knowledge. He has led courses in shamanism all over northern Europe since 1986 and lives and practices shamanism in Denmark.

April 5

Happy To Be Single

LIZ HODGKINSON

Our culture tends to idolise relationship and family, but there is also a joy and integrity in being single. Many people are natural singles happier untied and unattached. This evening focuses on the importance of autonomy and independence, and underlines the differences between being alone and being lonely, between solitude and solitariness - helping people untangle their relationships and emerge as people in their own right.

Liz Hodgkinson is a journalist and author. Her latest book is 'Happy To Be Single' and her other books include 'Sex is not Compulsory' and 'Obsessive Love'.

SPECIAL AFTERNOON TALK

Tuesday 6th April 3.00

A World Waiting to be Born

M. SCOTT PECK

This is a rare opportunity to listen to the man who is considered by many people to be the most influential and important contemporary teacher about relationships. With his 'A Road Less Travelled' he expanded the horizons and understanding of hundreds of thousands of people about romantic love and couple relationships. In his latest work 'A World Waiting to be Born' he addresses the whole challenge of living spiritually and with integrity in every aspect of our lives. If you can take the time off do not miss this afternoon with Dr. Peck.



Footnote: 30
Music and Re

MUSIC TO RELAX INSPIRE & UPLIFT YOU



OUT OF THE DEPTHS
by Terry Oldfield

Terry Oldfield

OUT OF THE DEPTHS ... C252/CD252

An exceptional recording that perfectly expresses the majesty of the whale. The tapping waves of sound that ride Terry's flute and the aching strain-like vocals of Jeanne arise deep beneath the surface, where whale song provides an evocative counterpart for a haunting lyrical plea. This compelling musical prayer of heart-felt communion alternates with cascades of entrancing beauty and joyous freedom, unfolding a feast of glorious sounds. Voted 'Album of the Year'!

EVEN WOLVES DREAM



An exclusive collection of some of the finest and most beautiful instrumental music ever composed. Each recording contains original music, a calm, uplifting and relaxing environment for inspiration, creativity and pure listening pleasure.

The Key To A Better Way Of Life

RAINBOW MEDITATION WITH MUSIC

A wonderfully relaxing meditation that takes you to dream by a waterfall on a warm summer's day. As Jean's voice soothes and guides you, the delicate strands of Robert Price's tranquil music provide the perfect accompaniment for your inner journey. A truly classic cassette.

Only £8.99 including postage and packing

To make cheque/postal orders payable to Jean Credland Cassettes and send to:

JEAN CREDLAND CASSETTES (DEPT II)
RAINBOWS, 7 BAILE HILL TERRACE, YORK YO1 1HF
TEL: 0904 629 024

Trade enquiries are welcomed. Please drop me a line for full details of all cassette.

8.

The North London Drumming Centre

the Birmingham Centre aims to provide a focus for the resurgence in street music, as well as a way to engage the spirit, both of the individual and the community. A weekly group, and regular workshops where people can learn to play their drummers. Britain's best drum workshop leaders present a series of workshops to drumming: Drumming, voice and dance as a celebration of the human spirit, and the drummers, to ground us in our inner experience, whatever that may be: the music we create with others.

22.23 Oct:21 '94· Drumbreaks with Peter Scott and Mythic Space

We will be working with the raw energy of the BEAT, which communicates directly with the body, enlivening and inspiring as it draws us on towards ecstasy.

A fully residential weekend workshop. All accommodation and meals are included. Friday 6pm - Sunday 5pm. Beautiful rural Wales but not too far from civilization. Near Chester. Cost £85 (deposit £25). For all details and booking contact Amanda.

A change of venue for the summer Drumbreak week - from lush Devon (Bosington Place) to wild, mysterious Cornwall a few miles from Lands End, and Old Boswednack Farm, owned by Pip McFarlane. The surroundings are majestic and Pip, new to drumming herself, will show us around her favourite wild places.

Three separate fully residential weekend workshops. All accommodation and meals are included. Friday 6pm-Sunday 5pm. On each of the Saturday evenings there will be a performance party celebration with Pete's band Mythic Space.

Four separate nonresidential workshops 10am - 5pm on Saturdays and Sunday. On each Saturday evening there will be a performance party/celebration with Pete's band Mythic Space.

Cost £65 (deposit £25) For all details and booking contact
Amanda, (or local contact Sue Richards, 75 Royal College St,
Camden, London NW1 0SE. Tel 071 380 0190)



Peter Scott is a drummer/percussionist based in Devon. He is a solo/freelance teacher of music, teaching sax and woodwind as well as drums and percussion. He is a recognised teacher of the Moving Center work of Gabrielle Roth - a method of using improvised dance to free just the body, then the rest of the psyche.

footnote 31.
Drumming.

Drumming
Dancing
Singing

"MYTHIC SPACE"

Workshop

Working with the raw energy of Cuban, Black, & African

A weekend of intense rhythmic dancing. Normally first part of a full for a new course and a great introduction to those who can't stop! Physical fitness is not required, though it is a result of the work. What is required is just the willingness to keep moving, and to give space to rhythm, the beat, the body, the breath and the dancer. The Rhythms are the rhythms and the more space and attention they are given, the more they will reveal.

LIFE DANCE: "EMOTION IN MOTION"

A weekend of intense dancing of emotion through the rhythms. Practising letting emotion be in motion, releasing the shapes of frozen history from our muscles. This has been called the 'washing machine workshop,' and is a deep cleansing. Most of us need to do it several times, and for some of us who wish it, this may become an art form of emotional release, which transforms us from the slave of our emotions to the choreographer. This powerful workshop provides a 'release space' and a place to acquire new skills of authentic, emotional expression. It is challenging work and for that reason, we recommend that you do a Life Dance 1 weekend first. Sometimes it is possible to do an introductory evening prior to the weekend.

Details of dates for Life Dance 1 And 2 weekends can be found in the Diary of Events. Details of local organisers can be found on page 9 of this brochure.

WOMEN'S LIFE DANCE

Weekends of dancing the 5 Rhythms in an all women context. We focus on the nuances of the rhythms to inform our self awareness and freedom to be and to dance all of ourselves. An intense experience of centrogen in motion.

Date: June 11-12, 1994. Cost: \$65.00 Venue: Sheffield.

Contact: Alison: 0742 584 554 or Ann: 0742 303 355.

Date: November 12-13, 1994. Cost: \$65.00 Venue: Oxford.

Contact: Anna C-J: 0844 351 666.

MEN'S LIFE DANCE: "WILD AT HEART"

WITH YAKOV & MAXIM STERN.

Some men wiff, some reckon they don't need it, some bother to come and find out for themselves. Some leave thinking they should have stayed at home, some leave feeling stronger, more complete. It's all rather mysterious in an earthy kind of way. For me, it's a once in a year recharge of a certain kind of energy I find I can't and don't wish to do without.

Date: June 11-12, 1994. Venue: Grimstone Manor, Devon.

Cost: £275.00 fully catered, fully residential.

Contact: Grimstone Community: 0822 854 358.

footnote 32
Dance



HEALING MOVEMENT

with RosieLi

Rainbow Dance: a course in creative dance exploring how our life-force finds expression according to the different chakras we are moving from.
Shamanic Dance: join in the Dance of Re-Creation and experience the power of spontaneous movement and expressive dance to dissolve physical and emotional blocks and to energize and harmonize yourselves.
Changing Woman Dancing: for women of all ages and abilities. Experience creative dance, simple African and Arabic styles, and visualisations to awaken and empower your physicality, womanhood and joy.

These classes are happening in London, Bath & Bristol, Winter & Spring 93 - new courses beginning January and April. Residentials on N.Devon Coast: Shamanic Healing Movement & "Changing Woman".

Dance your Dream awake! tel. 028 883 627

Footnote: 33.

Centres for Personal Growth.

STUDIO E

A CENTRE FOR CREATIVE SELF-DISCOVERY

49 The Avenue
London NW6 7NN
081 469 5443

Studio E is a centre for

- Individual therapy with two resident therapists
- Sandplay Therapy • A Ramana Maharshi Group
- Regular groups in
Expression Painting, Tai Chi (Long Form Yang Style),
Meditation, Ego,
- Monthly Writing Group

• Weekend Workshops

• Sunday afternoon Special Events with guest speakers

- WORKSHOP SPACE TO HIRE -

For information ring
081 469 5443

The Beattie White Foundation Registered Charity No 254544

THE OPEN CENTRE Therapy Movement Healing Growth

the open centre

Founded in 1977 we are the UK's longest established independent growth centre, offering a balance of different approaches within the broad field of humanistic psychology.

We are experienced practitioners with a rich variety of training and skills, offering both group and individual sessions:

Eric Whitton: (Transactional Analysis) Barbara McCree (The Feldenkrais Method)
Michael Wibberley (Encounter and Awareness) Guy Gladstone (Bioenergetics/
Psychodrama) Silke Ziehl (Pulsing/Postural Integration) Richard Mowbray (Primal
Integration).

For a free brochure of our comprehensive programme of introductory, ongoing,
weekend and Training events ring 081 549 9583 or write to:

The Open Centre, 188 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP.



One of Britain's longest established growth centres.

The Open Centre, 3rd floor, 188 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP

Telephone: 0181 549 9583

WINTER/SPRING 1996

A private countryside estate in the tranquil beauty of rural Dorset. Home of the Glyn Foundation, an educational trust which offers an inspiring variety of courses throughout the year designed to promote positive, healthy growth in our lives.

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

LINDA ABAYON
Integration Self Expression &
The Western Mind

SEARCE BEEBINGTON BEHRENS
Creating Living Friendships

RICK BRENNAN
Aerobics Technique

SISTER JAVANTI
Meditation

STEPHEN & RENATA ASH
Living in Joy

NEW YEAR RETREAT with WILLIAM BLOOM

LOWER SHAW FARM
19 SPRING 94 SUMMER

Footnote 37

For full details contact: LEON SHAW, 1001 SHAW LANE,
SUMMIT, N.J. 07901 with S.A.E. or TELEPHONE 0762 71000.
• Fully residential • Vegetarian wholefood • We also cater for outside groups

DYNAMIC EMOTIONS: GENUINE WITH SELF AND OTHERS

Alan Daly and Henry Winkler-Jaworski
February 2010 and 2011 and for 2011 all weeks 2011 January 2011

A remarkable new approach to learning in groups using carefully monitored settings with individual and group "prompts." The course gives access to a deeper understanding of our own feelings and behaviors a greater timeliness with clients, to discovering and experiencing more of our genuine nature as caregivers, and to developing relationships with others. The exchange of personal honesty moves beyond our regular and studied attachments or social masks. This event encourages lasting change by freeing the hidden self.

LIVING; ANTIMONY

Ulysses S. Grant

March 11th 1981 and 12th of year. For: 655. All credit 712. Lecture Study 711.

• Using drawings as a "map" for our city's journey, we can get guidance and encouragement about where we are going, who will be supporting our efforts and resources to playfully and creatively travel along our path. At times where we are not quite sure whether we should be following the intention, or unsure of what we have to do, we always are glad to change something according to the pathmaker's map as they suggest. The course makes full use of virtual tools within the project to help build personal culture.

ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR YOGA?

1.4a Persons and Marge Mowbray

May 19 1964 (1st copy) - 2nd copy sent for 2nd all copies 2/22 last time 2/22

Yoga combined on the unique way with the Alexander Technique with two teachers working together develops a better understanding of the mind/body/spirit connections. This understanding leads to awareness "beyond the technique" allowing the benefits to be taken on, and used in daily life.

MASSAGE AND THE FELDENKRAIS TECHNIQUE

James P. McDonald

[illegible]

For a report on a condition, a complaint or fear a person may have, a doctor may examine the person, using special equipment, examining and measuring, & a history of the age and physical condition, being well or ill and noting kind of treatment with medicine, & tests for a wound and other things, especially if there was a car crash, blood gases and the general body, and in many cases, procedures with a nurse, depending on what condition he is dealing with, especially with a person who is ill.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Series and British Frontiers

100-443887-100

A weekly "young leadership meeting" took place, with members discussing their monthly plans and a local Community expressed their interest and highly appreciate it's open to anyone. "Action and Youth" have an enthusiastic following in England, Europe and America. "Join the meeting of our club."

LITTLE GROVE

JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 1995



**Grove Lane
Chestern
Bucks**

The Skyros Centre Programme at a Glance

● WW = Writers' Workshop ● GT = Green Theory ● AW = Art Workshop ● PD = Personal Development
● HB = Holistic Bodywork ● CT = Community Facilitator sessions open to the entire community (bicyc p 19)

Session 1: April 8 - 21 (Easter)

WW: Alexander Gray
PD: Dana Glouberman (D) - *Life Choices and Life Changes*
Mia Furland - *Playground of Wisdom*
CF: Christine Shirley - Yoga, Meditation, Art Therapy

Session 2: April 29 - May 12

PD: Lisehanne Webster (D) - *Your Spiritual Potential*
Mavis Klein - *Joy and Pain in Intimate Relationships*
Anthony Hillin - *Empowerment for Gay Men*
CF: Rued Mathies - Landscape Art Therapy, Art

Session 3: May 13 - May 26

WW: Elaine Feinstein
PD: Rosemary Taylor - *Risking Being Alive*
HB: Richard Brennan - *Intro to Alexander Technique*
CF: Ken Eyeman - Yoga, Massage, Dance, Feldenkrais

Session 4: May 27 - June 9

WW: Andrew Davies
PD: Pat Ceccarelli (D) - *Change and the Creative Process*
Zak & Misha Hahu - *Sacred Sexuality*
CF: Ken Eyeman - Yoga, Massage, Dance, Feldenkrais

Session 5: June 10 - June 23

PD: Christina Hagelthorn (D) - *Psychodrama*
Bernie Raden - *Group Psychotherapy: Theory/Practice*
Natalie Rogers - *Talk Power*
CF: Janet Marks - Drama, Voice, Movement

Session 6: June 24 - July 7

GT: Henryk Skolimowski - *Walking in Beauty*
PD: Judi Lachard (D) - *Opening Your Heart*
Zoe Artemis - *A Dance Visionquest*
CF: Anastasia Stoyannides - Yoga, Authentic Movement

Session 7: July 8 - July 21

AW: Robert Venosa - *Fantastic Realism Painting*
PD: Pia Kelding Larsen (D) - *Symbol Therapy*
Adrienne Lee - *Celebration and Contact*
Raven Lamoreaux - *Shamanic Ceremony*
CF: Christian Darley - Yoga, Mime, Play

Session 8: July 22 - August 4

GT: Rudolf Bahro - *Subjectivity of Salvation*
PD: Ari Badanes (D) - *Choose Life at Whatever Risk*
Marilyn Feldberg - *Ways to the Self*
Henriette Klausner - *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain*
CF: Rosalind Widdowson - Yoga, Massage, Meditation

Session 9: August 5 - 18

WW: Wendy Cope
PD: Michael Eales (D) - *Re-awakening the True Self*
Ari Badanes - *Choose Life at Whatever Risk*
HB: Patricia Martello - *Bodanza*
CF: Christine Shirley - Yoga, Meditation, Art Therapy

Session 10: August 19 - Sept 1

WW: Neil Dunn
PD: Serge Beddington Behrens - *Life as a Celebration*
Melody Marks - *Food is Your Friend*
Mati Hall - *Reiki Healing I and II*
CF: Christine Shirley - Yoga, Meditation, Art Therapy

Session 11: September 2 - 15

WW: D.J.M. Thomas
PD: Marile Plevin (D) - *Creative Movement*
Harry Milton - *Ecstatic Healing*
Judith Mills - *Managing Your Career*
CF: Hazel Carey - African Dance, Voicework, Theatre

Session 12: September 16 - 29

WW: Hugo Williams
PD: Vyong Gilbert (D) - *New Beginnings*
Laryssa Delneste - *Tantric Sexuality*
HB: Ken Eyeman - *Bodywork, Massage and Movement*
CF: Michael Gabriel - Dance, Movement, Relaxation

Session 13: September 30 - October 13

WW: Sue Townsend
AW: Adrian Hamming - *Landscape and the Artist*
PD: Dana Glouberman (D) - *Life Choice and Life Changes*
CF: Chris Southall - Voice, Dance, Shamanic Journey

Session 14: Dec 23 - Jan 5 (Christmas & New Year)

PD: Michael Eales (D) - *The Christmas/New Year Alternative*
Zak and Misha Hahu - *Sacred Sexuality*
HB: Anthony Katsiotis - *Dance and Ritual*
CF: Christian Darley - Yoga, mime, play

(D) = Session Director; Nilo Sidis is Director of Sessions 3 & 10.
A certificate of attendance will be given to the students of all courses offered at the Skyros Centre. Some courses also count towards professional or academic qualifications.

Please note: The weather can be variable early and late in the season (sessions 1, 2 and 13) and the Christmas session is likely to be cold. But the carpets of wild flowers in the spring are exceptionally beautiful, and being in Skyros out of the tourist season has a special charm of its own.

HOLIDAY RESIDENTIAL CENTRES

footnote: 39

HOLIDAY COURSES IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Courses and workshops led by some of the finest people in the human potential movement, worldwide
- Alexander Technique; Bodywork; Circle Dance; Creative Expression; Fencing; Living the Dream; Story-telling; Massage; Rhythmic, Acrobatic and Personal Growth; Opening the Heart; Re-shaping Your Life; Tai Chi; Trusting Stillness in Nature; Voice and Movement; Yoga; and much more
- All year round, including Christmas and the New Year
- 3-4 hours per day, five days per week
- Plus optional massage, shiatsu, dance, music, song, games...
- Not to mention lying by the pool, good company, excursions to ancient villages and wild countryside
- Re-discover fun, laughter and spontaneous joy!

LOCATION

- Deep in the South of Spain, on the magnificent Alpujarran cultural park, between the mountains and the sea, at a height of 1800 feet, is Cortijo Romero, a jewelled oasis
- The real traditional Andalusia, with picturesque villages and an older way of life, where you can have a truly refreshing holiday in the land of the 'siesta' and 'manana'
- 1 1/2 hours from Granada, with its unique and breathtaking Alhambra palace and gardens
- 2 1/2 hours from Malaga with frequent flights from all over Europe



MANOIR LES THOMAS

Grand Canyon, 24150 Lalande, France



A HOME FOR HOLISTIC HOLIDAYS AND THE CREATIVE AND HEALING ARTS

This lovely manor house in the heart of the Dordogne offers you a holiday with a difference. Its doors open onto a world of peace, pleasure and refreshment...

- *for the body* - enjoy the open fields and wooded hills ideal for walks and riding a swim in pool, river or lake nearby - sample fresh food and famous wines from the local markets - try out the dance, yoga, massage and other activities we offer
- *for the heart* - relish the peace and plenty with friends or in your own company - share discovery, understanding, work and fun with others drawn by the same pleasures and interests
- *for the mind* - explore the rich history and prehistory of this picturesque region with its famous caves, fortified towns and ancient villages - exchange ideas and experiences with other interested, and interesting, visitors - extend your skills through a course chosen from our varied programmes
- *for the spirit* - tune into the special energy of this ancient part of France, where the sacredness of Earth, cherished through centuries, is still vibrant, and invites you to reconnect with your own path of power - here you can walk in both the worlds of beauty, and find in both companions making the same adventurous journey - a place to share meditation, healing, visions, dreams and insights that nourish the soul and illumine the way forward

Manoir Les Thomas is part of the Energy Exchange Network, a forum for people of many skills and interests who want to share and exchange ideas, experiences, questions, dreams and discoveries relating to social, spiritual, ecological, psychological and practical issues in personal and public life. As well as the opportunity to meet at the Manoir, there are regular gatherings in the UK, a newsletter and contact list.

It then appeared time to work more intensely with a small group which the leader referred to as a 'Seed'. He outlined generally the idea of letting whatever emerges to arise and he worked on with the support of your fellow group members.

I worked in a group of 4 with 2 people very experienced, partner of leader and the other woman done various groups + did a good visualization, Seed was at Centre on Great Island. Young man had attended wkend previously.

The woman with a lot of experience went first, this involved lying down with the supporters lying closely watching.

Physical support shaking/holding was initiated. With the other experienced woman asking questions of 'where are you'.

The 'seed' ended by discussing the feelings + issues that had arisen.

The room became a hive of activity as each small group planned where they would like to be + how they would like to be with various cushions and blankets. It appeared that various nests were being made to encourage the seed to grow.

I didn't know what to expect at this stage and felt quite concerned when this I began to repeat a movement with her arm, make sounds and appear to be feeling very unhappy. The noise evolved to surround never being loved by her father.